

NATARAJA IN ART, THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

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IN

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C. SIVARAMAMURTI



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NAṬARĀJA IN ART, THOUGHT AND LITERATURE





FRONTISPIECE : *Śiva and Pārvatī witnessing dance, Chamba School, late 18th century A. D., National Museum.*

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NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

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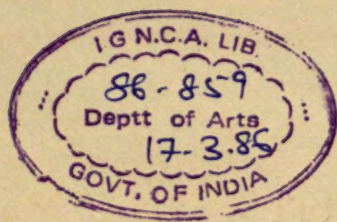
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Indira Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts

To
the memory of
PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
as a mark of affection,
esteem and gratitude



*maulau gaṅgāśaśāṅkau karacharaṇatale komalāṅgā bhujāṅgāḥ
vāme bhāge dayādrā himagiritanayā chandanam sarvagātre
ittham śīlam prabhūtam tava kanakasabhānātha voḍhum kva śaktis
chitte nirvedatapte yadi bhavati na te nityavāso madīye*

Appayya Dikshita

On your head, you have the cool stream of Gaṅgā and the chilly moon, on your hands and feet, there are slimy cold snakes, the left half of your body holds the daughter of the snowclad mountain, who is herself eternally moist with mercy, and on your entire body, lo! here is the cold sandal paste. Thus, oh! Lord of the golden hall! where have you the power to bear this excessive cold, if you cannot resort for eternal dwelling in my heart, which is ever ablaze with despair.





PRIME MINISTER

FOREWORD

One cannot but marvel at the deep insight and sweep of imagination of our ancients to visualise cosmic energy in the form of Nataraja. The dance of the Nataraja symbolises truth and beauty; realisation and dissolution; force and rhythm; movement and change; time flowing and time still. The Nataraja is a representation of the divine as creator and artist. The Nataraja has been chiselled, painted, described and sung about by artists without number down the centuries in India and in countries of our neighbourhood which shared part of our culture.

Dr. Sivaramamurti has devoted a lifetime to iconography, and more especially to the Nataraja theme. His book promises to be a definitive work on the subject and a monument to Indian scholarship.

Indira Gandhi
(Indira Gandhi)

New Delhi,
February 21, 1974.



PREFACE

Towards the end of 1968, I was very kindly offered a Fellowship by the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. Nothing could have made me happier than to associate myself in a dedicated work with the name of the greatest beacon of light in India in our times. This in itself I considered an augury indeed of accomplishment of the best in research on any chosen theme. I can neither forget the encouraging exhortation of Miss. Padmaja Naidu to do my very best on a chosen theme, nor the delightful choice of theme so kindly suggested by Dr. Karan Singh, both of which constituted the initial blessing for godspeed as I started on my subject of research. Naṭarāja has always been a favourite theme of mine. As long ago as when I was a research student in the Madras University I had my own peculiar musings on Naṭarāja. "How would have Naṭarāja been depicted in the time of Bhagavān Patañjali?" would be my query, and I would fancy him dancing with a single pair of arms (*bāhubhyām uta te namaḥ*), wearing his locks in *ushṇīṣha* fashion (*namaḥ kapardine, ushṇīṣiṇe*) in the dance hall of the universe (*namas sabhābhyas sabhāpatibhyaścha*) holding the snakes (*ahimścha sarvān jambhayan*), himself lit up with a glow (*tvishimate*), sounding the drum (*namo dundubhyāya chāhananyāya cha*). I would then wonder how wonderful he would have looked in the hey day of South Indian art, during the time of the Pallavas with the peculiar make up of his *jaṭās*, the *yajñopavīta* flowing over his right arm, all his four arms in *nātyahastas* or carrying attributes, a host of carvings from the Rājasimheśvara temple in Kāñchīpuram fleeting before



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my mind's eye. I would pause and sketch the pictures of my fancy in the appropriate style of the period, the second century B.C. and the eighth century A.D. respectively. My fancy would next imagine my favourite *śivalāṇḍavastotra*, to which I was always attracted by its remarkable alliteration, resonance and dance rhythm, not precluding its possible composition by a genius not inferior to Rāvaṇa to whom it is traditionally attributed, and wonder how it would have been written by a scribe of Patañjali's time or by a contemporary of the Pallavas. I would then scribble it out with all the fervour and enthusiasm of a youngster fervently studying Indian palaeography. The result is in the two sketches on p. ix and the first three verses transcribed in Brāhmī of the second century B.C. and in Pallava Grantha of the eighth century A.D.

Naṭarāja has always been a favourite theme of mine. I had discussed some aspects of Naṭarāja, the Lord of Dance, in appropriate context in several of my books but I could never imagine, until I took up this theme as a complete unit in itself for elaborate study, how vast was its scope. The material that I have collected is no doubt vast, but as I worked I realised that the theme is inexhaustible. Naṭarāja was no longer just in the golden hall at Chidambaram. His dance halls appeared all over our vast country. Naṭarāja ceased to be a theme mainly for sculptures in stone and metal in South India, and became manifest as a great concept spread all over the country—to the south, west, north and east. It did not stop at that. A magnificent theme like this, the very symbol of Indian art, thought and culture, undoubtedly cannot be confined to a limited sphere and I rightly found it everywhere, beyond the Indian frontiers, nearly all over Asia.

Finally, when I recall how Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the scholar, statesman, with a heart as wide as the ocean for appreciation of all that was good and worthy of encouragement, called for my tiny little book, the first to see the light of day, and showered his blessings on a young and unknown scholar, I feel that this great honour conferred on me, almost towards the end of my career, is indeed a supreme satisfaction for me as an author. This call asking me to conduct research on a noble theme with a fellowship instituted in the name of the noblest son of India, so that I could have his blessings again, is almost a fulfilment of all the writing in which I have been engaged all these years. I have done my best in preparing this volume on Naṭarāja, for which I have gathered material both literary and artistic from all over India, nay Asia and the rest of the world. My satisfaction would be complete if this book could be, as I hope, an adequate offering to the memory of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in whose name, this fellowship has held out for me an almost impossible ideal to accomplish.

On the third of January 1969, I bowed to the Dancing Lord at Chidambaram after witnessing his sandal bath in cold mid-winter on the sacred day of the constellation of *Ārdra*, just as did, on the selfsame day, my ancestor of the seventeenth remote, in the sixteenth century, and composed a significant verse (given on page vi) and I commenced my study of this theme, and again on the same occasion on January 10, 1971 I completed it with the satisfaction that it has been possible to elucidate to an extent the import of the Lord's dance.

I am thankful to the Ministry of Education for permission accorded to me to take up this fellowship from the day I went on leave preparatory to relinquishing charge of the Directorship of the National Museum. It is my great pleasure to thank my colleagues in the Archaeological Survey of India and from the different Museums all over India, the Archaeological Departments in different States in India, and colleagues from Museums in Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Pakistan and Ceylon. In addition to help that I have received from all these colleagues, other individuals and institutions have also extended their hand of cooperation and help. I must thank here Monsieur J. Daridan, the former French Ambassador in India, the Academy of the American Institute of Indian Studies, Banaras, and the French Academy at Pondicherry for very kindly supplying me a number of photographs as an encouraging gift for helping me in this work.

For personally acquainting myself with the famous Polonnaruva bronzes, studied in the early years of this century by Dr. Coomaraswamy and Sir P. Ramanathan, as also the ones discovered just a decade ago and discussed by Dr. Godakumbura, I had requested help from Dr. D. H. P. H.

de Silva, Director of the National Museum, Colombo, who very readily responded. I cannot be adequately thankful to him and to his colleagues and to Dr. R. H. de Silva, Commissioner of the Archaeological Department in Ceylon, for all the help that was accorded to me when I was there. I was specially taken to Anuradhapura at short notice, where I could study the bronzes from Polonnaruwa unearthed in 1960. Mr. Haque, the Director of the Dacca Museum very kindly provided me with photographs of the dancing Śiva, described by Dr. N. K. Bhattasali, and two additional ones he had collected recently for the Museum.

The very first photograph to start my study of Naṭarāja was kindly supplied by Mrs. Pupul Jayakar who has one of the earliest and the most magnificent of Naṭarāja sculptures in her own collection, a Gupta one from Nāchnā. I am most grateful to her for this aid.

Recently, when Mr. Khandalavala visited the Cleveland Museum of Art in the United States of America, he noticed a dancing figure of Śiva of the Basohli school and thoughtfully arranged for a photograph of it to help me in my study. To him and to Mrs. Margaret Marcus of the Cleveland Museum I am most grateful for helping me with the photograph.

Photographs most difficult to obtain were those required from Vietnam. These were very kindly procured and sent by Professor M. Jean Filliozat to whom I am most beholden.

Dr. Grace Morley, Head of the ICOM Regional Agency in Asia, has not only with infinite patience gone through this large volume of text and offered many valuable suggestions, but also, whenever out touring in South East Asia, had always my 'Naṭarāja' in mind to obtain, if possible, rare photographs that I might require. She thus procured some photos from Vietnam and Indonesia through the kindness of her friends Mr. Carl Heffley and Mr. Lee Fickle from Vietnam and Indonesia respectively. To both of them I offer my thanks, but I know not how to adequately thank Dr. Morley for all this kindness that she has bestowed on me.

A photograph of the most beautiful Gurjara Pratihāra image of Ardhanārīśvara was kindly made available by Rajamata Gayatri Devi of Jaipur to whom I am most grateful.

I individually thank all my friends who have helped me with photographs, reprints, books and facilities for study: Mr. O. P. Agrawala, Mr. R. C. Agrawala, Mlle. Jeanine Auboyer, Mr. Ballab Saran, Mlle. Benisti, Mr. Arun Bhattacharjee, Dr. K. Bhattacharya, Mr. S. K. Dikshit, Mr. M. C. Das, Dr. B. Dagens, Mrs. Madhuri Desai, Dr. P. B. Desai, Mr. V. L. Devkar, Mr. M. N. Deshpande, Professor M. Jean Filliozat, Dr. Fong Chou, Dr. P. L. Gupta, Dr. Kalyan J. Ganguli, Dr. G. S. Gai, Mr. Enamul Haque, Dr. H. Haertel, Mr. John Irwin, Mr. A. Joshi, Mr. Niraj Jain, Mr. Krishna Dev, Mr. M. D. Khare, Md. Abdul Waheed Khan, Dr. Rai Krishnadas, Mr. B. B. Lal, Mr. V. Mishra, Mr. K. S. Mathur, Mr. Jagdish Mittal, Mr. K. Manickyam, Dr. Moti Chandra, Mr. V. R. Nambiar, Mr. D. R. Patil, Mr. P. Z. Pattabhiraman, Dr. P. H. Pott, Mr. K. Parameswaran Pillai, Mr. S. R. Rao, Dr. S. C. Roy, Mr. Raghubir Singh, Mr. V. Ramanathan, Dr. R. Subrahmanyam, Dr. S. T. Satyamurti, Dr. A. Van Schendal, Dr. M. Seshadri, Mr. L. Sickman, Mr. R. C. Sharma, Mr. S. P. Srivastava, Mr. V. S. Srivastava, Mr. S. Tiwari, Mr. B. K. Thapar, Mr. N. G. Unnithan, Mr. K. R. Vijayaraghavan, Mr. D. K. Vaidya and Mrs. E. Zannas.

I am grateful to Mr. Gurucharan Singh Bagga who carefully prepared not only the long typescript but also the Index with a rare devotion to the task. I cannot also adequately express my thanks to Sree Saraswat Press Ltd. for their personal interest and expedition in printing the book most elegantly, and it is a pleasure to record the help of Mr. Guha Ray, Mr. Dipak Ghosh and Mr. Sengupta.

There can be no greater joy for me than seeing this book received by scholars as an offering of a posy of flowers from a rich garden of art, thought and literature, to the great form that symbolises the highest perfection of Indian intellect and aesthetic taste and which, as one single theme, epitomises all that is great and glorious in the Indian spirit.

I cannot adequately express how grateful I feel to our Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi for graciously decorating this book with her thought-provoking Foreword which sums up the beauty and significance of the Naṭarāja concept.

Words fail me to thank the authorities of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund for all the encouragement that I have received in my pursuit of this theme of my research. I am beholden to Mr. M. V. Rajan who was always ready with help and guidance.

National Museum,
New Delhi
March 5, 1974

C. SIVARAMAMURTI
Director

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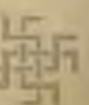
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| M | Fig. 6 | Śiva dancing with two Gaṇas flanking him, playing the drum and clapping the hands to keep time, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Melaperumballam, Tañjāvūr Distt., Madras Museum. |
| M | Fig. 7 | Dance with renowned celestial <i>apsaras</i> , Alambushā, Miśrakeśī, Padmāvati and Subhadrā dancing to the accompaniment of orchestral music in Sudharmā <i>devasabhā</i> , Śuṅga, 2nd century B.C., Bhārhut, Indian Museum, Calcutta. |
| M | Fig. 8 | Celestial dancers and musicians in pure <i>nṛitta</i> in musical consonance, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. |
| Chapter 3 | | |
| M | Fig. 1 | <i>Alidhanṛitta</i> of Śiva in the warrior pose, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Virūpāksha temple, Paṭṭadakal. |
| M | Fig. 2 | Lintel representing Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, all the three as <i>nāṭyāchāryas</i> , Kākatiya, 12th century A.D., Wāraṅgal, National Museum. |
| M | Fig. 3 | Gaṇeśa dancing, Hoysaḷa, 12th century A.D., Hoysaḷeśvarā temple, Halebid. |
| M | Fig. 4 | Gaṇeśa and Mātṛikā Brahmāṇī dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abaneri. |
| C.P. | Fig. 5 | Śiva dancing with Mohinī, painting from Maṭṭāñcherī Palace, late Kerala, 17th century A.D. |
| C.P. | Fig. 6 | Śiva and Pārvatī, watching Mohinī dance, late Chera, 18th century A.D., Maṭṭāñcherī Palace, Cochín, Kerala. |
| L | Fig. 7 | Naṭarāja removing the veil of <i>Māyā</i> , Vākāṭaka, 5th century A.D., Elephanta. |
| M | Fig. 8 | Śiva and Pārvatī holding <i>amṛita kalaśa</i> for enlivening and rejuvenating by sprinkling ambrosia, 11th century A.D., Kumbheśvara temple tank, Paṭan, Nepal. |

- L Fig. 9 Śiva dancing on his bull Nandi, Pāla, 11th century A.D., Śaṅkarabandha, Dacca Museum, Bangladesh.
- C.P. Fig. 10 Raṅganātha as Padmanābha watching Śiva's dance, late Chera, 18th century A.D., Padmanābhapuram Palace, Kerala.

Chapter 4

- M Fig. 1 Beginning of the panels illustrating *karāṇas* demonstrated by Śiva himself, towards the end here is *talapushpapuṣa*, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. They begin on the east corridor, south wing of the first floor of the *vimāna*.
- M Fig. 2 Panels illustrating the *karāṇas* demonstrated by Śiva himself, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. Some of them towards the end are unfinished on the north corridor of the first storey of the *vimāna*.
- M Fig. 3 Panel showing *talapushpapuṣa*, *karāṇa* 1, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 4 Panel No. 2, *svastikarechita*, *karāṇa* 7, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 5 Panel No. 5, *samanakha*, *karāṇa* 5, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 6 Panels No. 6 and 7; 6 is *līna*, *karāṇa* 6, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 7 Sculptured panel 8, *maṇḍalasvastika*, *karāṇa* 8, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 8 Sculptured panels No. 9 and 10; 9 is *nikuṭṭaka*, *karāṇa* 9, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara Temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 9 Sculptured panel 11, *kaṭichinna*, *karāṇa* 11, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 10 Sculptured panels 12 and 13, *ardharechitaka* and *vakshassvastika*, *karāṇas* 12 and 13, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 11 Panels No. 13 and 14, *vakshassvastika* and *unmattaka*, *karāṇas* 13 and 14, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 12 Panels No. 15 and 16, *svastika* and *prishṭhasvastika*, *karāṇas* 15 and 16, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 13 Panel No. 17, *diksvastika*, *karāṇa* 17, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 14 Panels No. 18 and 19, *alātaka* and *kaṭisama*, *karāṇas* 18 and 19, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 15 Panels No. 20 and 21, *ākshiptarechita* and *vikshiptākshipta*, *karāṇas* 20 and 21, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 16 Panels No. 22 and 23, *ardhasvastika* and *añchita*, *karāṇas* 22 and 23, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 17 Panels No. 24 and 25, *bhujāṅgaṭrāsita* and *urdhvajānu*, *karāṇas* 24 and 25, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 18 Panels No. 26 and 27, *nikuñchita* and *mattalli*, *karāṇas* 26 and 27, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 19 Panels No. 27 and 28, *mattalli* and *ardhamattalli*, *karāṇas* 26 and 27, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

M	Fig. 20	Panels No. 29 and 30, <i>rechitanikuṭṭita</i> and <i>pādāpaviddhaka</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 29 and 30, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 21	Panel No. 31, <i>valita</i> , <i>karaṇa</i> 31, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 22	Panel No. 32, <i>ghūrṇita</i> , <i>karaṇa</i> 32, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 23	Panels No. 33 and 34, <i>lalita</i> and <i>daṇḍapaksha</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 33 and 34, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 24	Panel No. 35, <i>bhujāṅgatrasiṭarechita</i> , <i>karaṇa</i> 35, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 25	Panels No. 36 and 37, <i>nūpura</i> and <i>vaiśākha rechitaka</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 36 and 37, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 26	Panels No. 38 and 39, <i>bhramaraka</i> and <i>chatura</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 38 and 39, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 27	Panels No. 40 and 41, <i>bhujāṅgāñchitaka</i> and <i>daṇḍakarechita</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 40 and 41, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 28	Panels No. 42 and 43, <i>vṛiśchikakuṭṭita</i> and <i>kaṭibhrānta</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 42 and 43, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 29	Panels No. 44 and 45, <i>latāvṛiśchika</i> and <i>chhinna</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 44 and 45, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 30	Panels No. 46 and 47, <i>vṛiśchikarechita</i> and <i>vṛiśchika</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 46 and 47, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 31	Panels No. 48 and 49, <i>vyamsita</i> and <i>pārśvanikuṭṭaka</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 48 and 49, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 32	Panels No. 50 and 51, <i>lalāṭatilaka</i> and <i>krāntaka</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 50 and 51, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 33	Panels No. 52, 53 and 54, <i>kuñchita</i> , <i>chakramaṇḍala</i> , <i>uromaṇḍala</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 52, 53 and 54, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 34	Panels No. 55 and 56, <i>ākshipta</i> and <i>talavilasita</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 55 and 56, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 35	Panels No. 56 and 57, <i>talavilasita</i> , and <i>argala</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 56 and 57, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 36	Panel No. 58, <i>vikshipta</i> , <i>karaṇa</i> 58, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 37	Panels No. 59, 60 and 61, <i>āvarta</i> , <i>dolapāda</i> and <i>vivṛitta</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 59, 60 and 61, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 38	Panels No. 62 and 63, <i>vinivṛitta</i> and <i>pārśvakrānta</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 62 and 63, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 39	Panels No. 63 and 64, <i>pārśvakrānta</i> and <i>nistambhita</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 63 and 64, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 40	Panels No. 65 and 66, <i>vidyubhrānta</i> and <i>atīkrānta</i> , <i>karaṇas</i> 65 and 66, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
M	Fig. 41	Panel No. 67, <i>vivartitaka</i> , <i>karaṇa</i> 67, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

- M Fig. 42 Panel No. 68, *gajakriḍitaka*, *karaṇa* 68, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 43 Panel No. 69, *talasamsphoṭita*, *karaṇa* 69, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 44 Panels No. 70 and 71, *garuḍapḷutaka* and *gaṇḍasūchī*, *karaṇas* 70 and 71, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 45 Panels No. 72 and 73, *parivṛitta* and *pārśvajānu*, *karaṇas* 72 and 73, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 46 Panels No. 74 and 75, *grīdhrāvalīnaka* and *sannata*, *karaṇas* 74 and 75, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 47 Panel No. 76, *sūchī*, *karaṇa* 76, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 48 Panels No. 77 and 78, *ardhasūchī* and *sūchīvidha*, *karaṇas* 77 and 78, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 49 Panels No. 79 and 80, *apakrānta* and *mayūralalita*, *karaṇas* 79 and 80, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 50 Panel No. 81, *sarpita*, *karaṇa* 81, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

Chapter 5

- M Fig. 1 Kṛishṇa Veṇugopāla in a *rāsamaṇḍala* with a circle of musicians playing orchestra, his weapons *śaṅkha* and *chakra* repeated in *maṇḍala* and the cows, cowherds and milkmaids in another *maṇḍala* encircling this. From the ceiling of *maṇḍapa* of Vīraṇārāyaṇa temple, Hoysaḷa, 12th century A.D., Belwāḍi, Mysore.
- M Fig. 2 *Talapapushpapuṭa*. The figure next to *talapapushpapuṭa* is probably *chakramaṇḍala*, *karaṇa* 53 (see p. 66) or even possibly *argala*, *karaṇa* 57 (see p. 67). Late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 3 *Diksvastika*, *karaṇa* 17, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 4 *Karaṇas* in a row. The central one is *kaṭisama*, *karaṇa* 19, the *karaṇa* to its right is *bhramaraka*, *karaṇa* 38 (see p. 64, 51) and the *karaṇa* to the left is *lalāṭatilaka*, *karaṇa* 50. Late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 5 *Ardhasvastika*, *karaṇa* 22, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 6 *Ardhasvastika* as the first figure and the second *ūrdhvajānu*, *karaṇa* No. 5, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 7 *Bhujāṅgatrāsita*, *karaṇa* 24, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 8 *Daṇḍapaksha*, *karaṇa* 34, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 9 *Daṇḍarechita*, *karaṇa* 41, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 10 *Vṛīśchikarechita*, *karaṇa* 46, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 11 *Vṛīśchika*, *karaṇa* 47, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

- M Fig. 12 *Vṛiśchika*, *karāṇa* 47, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 13 *Lalāṭatilaka*, *karāṇa* 50, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 14 *Lalāṭatilaka* by Kṛishṇa, *karāṇa* 50, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 15 The third one in the frieze is *uromaṇḍala*, *karāṇa* 54. The central one is *nikuñchita*, *karāṇa* 26, already referred to (see p. 63) and the first one *sarpita*, *karāṇa* 18 (see p. 68). Late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 16 *Vidyubhrānta*, *karāṇa* 65, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 17 *Atikrānta*, *karāṇa* 66, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 18 Another representation of *Ardhasvastika*, *karāṇa* 22 (see p. 63), and *Mayūralalita*, *karāṇa* 80 (see p. 64). Late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 19 *Sūchividdha*, *karāṇa* 78, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 20 One represents *argala*, *karāṇa* 57 (see p. 67, 69) and the other *apakrānta*, *karāṇa* 79 (see p. 68), late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 21 *Talavilasita*, *karāṇa* 56, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.
- M Fig. 22 *Śakaṭāsya*, *karāṇa* 107, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam. Here as well as in Chidambaram, *śakaṭāsya* has been given in a different way from the original correct position described by Abhinavagupta as pointed out by Dr. Raghavan in his edition of *Nṛīttaratnāvalī* by Jāya. The mistake appears to have crept in sufficiently early and should not be taken as a serious lapse in *nāṭya*.
- M Fig. 23 *Lalāṭatilaka*, *karāṇa* 50, late Choḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

Chapter 6

- M Fig. 1 Mātṛikā Chaṇḍikā dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abanerī, Rājasthān.
- M Fig. 2 Chāmuṇḍā flanked by Bhairavas, all the three dancing, Haihaya, 10th century A.D., rock-cut panels, Kalañjār.
- M Fig. 3 Devī dancing, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayeśvara temple, Udaipur.
- M Fig. 4 Sarasvatī dancing beside *haṁsa*, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayeśvara temple, Udaipur.
- M Fig. 5 Varuṇa dancing on *makara*, Kākatiya, 12th century A.D., from ceiling of Rāmappa temple, Pālampeṭ, Hyderabad Museum.
- M Fig. 6 Sarasvatī dancing on swan, Kākatiya, 12th century A.D., from ceiling of Rāmappa temple, Pālampeṭ, Hyderabad Museum.

Chapter 7

- M Fig. 1 Mātṛikās dancing, rock-cut frieze, late Gupta or Vardhana, 6th century A.D., Maṇḍor, Rājasthān.
- M Fig. 2 Mātṛikās dancing, early Western Chāḷukya, 6th century A.D., Rāvalpāḍī cave, Aihole.

- M Fig. 3 Natarāja dancing with Mātṛikās, early Western Chālukya, 6th century A.D., Rāval-pāḍi cave, Aihole.

Chapter 8

- M Fig. 1 Kālāntaka, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 2 Tripurāntaka burning up by flames the Tripuras who are confused, 8th century A.D., Early Western Chālukya, Pāpanāśa temple, Paṭṭaḍakal.
- M Fig. 3 Ardhanārīśvara dancing with one foot on the bull and another on the lion, terra-cotta, 13th century A.D., Rāṇi Pokrī, Kāthmaṇḍu, Nepal.
- M Fig. 4 Ardhanārīśvara dancing, Chandella, 11th century A.D., from near Saṭṇā, probably from Khajurāho itself, National Museum.
- M Fig. 5 Vṛishabhāntika, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Tiruveṅkāḍu, Tañjāvūr Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr.
- L Fig. 6 Śiva with his mass of locks looking a large cloud, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.
- L Fig. 7 Śiva with *jaṭābhāra* arranged almost like a large cloud, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.
- L Fig. 8 Śiva with his mass of locks looking a large cloud, Pāṇḍya, 7th century A.D.
- M Fig. 9 Gajāntaka, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Vaḷuvūr, Tañjāvūr Distt.
- M Fig. 10 Bhikshātana, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 11 Group of Mātṛikās dancing with Śiva, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abanerī.
- M Fig. 12 Vāmadeva Śiva dancing, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Śiva temple, Nāchnā Kuṭhāra, Central India.
- M Fig. 13 Śiva teaches Pārvatī *lāya*, Chaulukya, 11th century A.D., Modhera.
- M Fig. 14 Śiva exercising *Taṇḍu* in dance steps, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.
- M Fig. 15 Śiva teaching the principles of *nāṭya* to Bharata, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.
- M Fig. 16 Devī dressing herself by adorning her ear with earring, adjusting her braid, looking into the mirror and slipping anklets on her legs for dance, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abanerī.

Chapter 9

- L Fig. 1 Line drawing clearly indicating the composition of the painting illustrated in Figure 2.
- M Fig. 2 Śiva seated in Kailāsa watching a pair of dancers, below is a row of dancers and musicians sailing along with the clouds. Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- C.P. Fig. 3 Continuation of the painting illustrated in Figure 2. A row of dancers and musicians, another dancer further down, Cheramān hurrying to Kailāsa on his horse, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara Temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 4 Details of dancers and musicians in a row in the painting illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 5 The evening dance of Śiva surrounded by celestials with Devī enthroned as the witness of his dance, Kāngrā school, 18th century A.D., Tagore Collection.

- M Fig. 6 Rock-cut sculpture illustrating Śiva dancing, witnessed by Devī standing beside the bull, other celestials like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra in the background, Gaṇas watching with attention and helping the musical orchestra, Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Tirupparamkuṇṇam.

Chapter 11

- M Fig. 1 Naṭarāja, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Gaṅgaikōṇḍacholapuram, Tiruchirāpalli Distt.
- M Fig. 2 Śiva dancing, *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Perur.
- C.P. Fig. 3 Śiva in *ālīḍha* seated on chariot fighting Tripuras, Early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 4 Śiva dancing, 18th century A.D., Kāngrā, 18th century A.D., Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras.

Chapter 12

- L Fig. 1 The crescent moon on Śiva's head, an aphorism of beauty.
- L Fig. 2 Wavy line or *jalataraṅga* of the locks of Śiva floating out in dance.
- L Fig. 3 Peacock feathers adorning *jaṭās* of Śiva: suggestion of the hunter *kirāta* in Kirātamūrti.
- L Fig. 4 Undulating snake adorning wavy *jaṭās* of Śiva.
- L Fig. 5 Gaṅgā, charming mermaid, settled on *jaṭās* as contrast to the grinning skull.
- L Fig. 6 *Kusumāsēkhara* of Śiva, the *jaṭās* adorned with *ashṭapushpikā*, *dhuttūra* prominent, a garland of flowers trailing charmingly on *jaṭās*.
- L Fig. 7 *Jaṭās* hanging loose also in wavy fashion on the back and shoulders at the commencement of dance, before whirling on high.
- L Fig. 8 Swirling locks, a network of long wavy lines, with flowers set at intervals between them, creating a chequered pattern of network, and the fluttering *uttariya* from the *udarabandha* of Śiva.
- L Fig. 9 The eye on the forehead of Śiva making him the opposite of Virūpāksha beautiful to look at. The best example of the Gupta period.
- M Fig. 10 Ardhanārīśvara bust with the eye on the forehead beautiful as a *tilaka* mark. Note also *jaṭās* to right and braid to left and earring on left lobe and right lobe free. Early Gupta, 4th century A.D., Mathurā Museum.
- L Fig. 11 Dancing flames springing up from the *ardhachandra hasta* of Śiva.

Chapter 13

- M Fig. 1 Śiva as Agnirudra and *yajamāna* against *Śivaliṅga* shown as *ushṇīṣin* trampling Apasmāra, Sātavāhana, 2nd century A.D., Guḍimallam, Chittor Distt., A.P.
- M Fig. 2 Śiva carrying *khaṭvāṅga* (club) and striding in *pratyālīḍha* pose, trampling Apasmāra, on coin of Maues, Indo-Greek, 1st century B.C.
- M Fig. 3 Copper seal showing Śiva carrying club, *khaṭvāṅga* combined with *triśūla*, striding in warrior pose, *ālīḍha*, legend in Brāhmī and Kharoshthī. Brāhmī legend *Śivarakshita*, Indo-Greek, 1st century B.C., Taxilā.
- M Fig. 4 Viṇādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti seated on a hill (Himālaya) with Gaṇas below, carrying harp-shaped *viṇā* in his hand. Śūṅga, 2nd century B.C., terracotta, from the collection of Gopi Krishna Kanoria.

Gupta

- M Fig. 5 Naṭarāja dancing, the finest of its kind, though fragmented, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Collection of Mis. Pupul Jayakar, Nāchnā.
- M Fig. 6 Multi-armed Śiva dancing as the central figure of door lintel. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Sakore, M.P.
- M Fig. 7 Śiva as Viṇādhara as central figure on door lintel. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Nāchnā.
- M Fig. 8 Śiva seated as Viṇādhara flanking Saptamātrikās to right, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., cave XXI, Rāmeśvara, Ellora.
- M Fig. 9 Multi-armed Śiva dancing, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Sirpūr.

Vākāṭaka

- M Fig. 10 Śiva dancing in *lalita*, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Cave 15, Daśāvatāra, Ellora.
- M Fig. 11 Śiva dancing in *chatura*, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Cave 22, Rāmeśvara, Ellora.
- M Fig. 12 Naṭarāja dancing in *lalita*, the finest example, Vākāṭaka, 5th-6th century A.D., Elephanta.
- M Fig. 13 Śiva as *saptasvaramaya* musical master personifying the seven notes, four musical Gaṇas, playing the four principal instruments, the *viṇā*, flute, drum and cymbals, at his feet, Vākāṭaka, 5th century A.D., Parel.

Early Bhaṇja

- M Fig. 14 Multi-armed Śiva dancing as Viṇādhara, inscribed stele, Bhaṇja, 6th century A.D., Asanapaṭ, Orissa.

Vishṇukunḍin

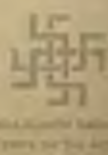
- M Fig. 15 Multi-armed Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, 6th century A.D., Vishṇukunḍin, Mugal-rājapuram cave, Bezvāḍa.

Early Pallava

- M Fig. 16 Multi-armed Śiva dancing, early Pallava, 6th century A.D., Bhairavakoṇḍa cave, Nellore Distt.

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- M Fig. 17 Śiva dancing in *chatura*, 6th century A.D., Cave No. 1, Bādāmī, Mysore.
- M Fig. 18 Six-armed Śiva dancing, early Western Chāḷukya, probably from Virūpāksha temple, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Kannaḍa Research Institute, Dhārwar.
- M Fig. 19 Śiva on façade of Jambuliṅgeśvara temple, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal.
- M Fig. 20 Detail of Śiva on façade of Jambuliṅgeśvara temple, Paṭṭaḍakal.
- M Fig. 21 Śiva dancing swaying his body, on pillar with Śūrpaṇakhā panel below it, Virūpāksha temple, early Western Chāḷukya, Paṭṭaḍakal.
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- M Fig. 25 Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *rechita nikuṭṭita*, early Western Chālukya, Huchiyappa temple, Aihole.
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- M Fig. 27 Gaṅgādhara as dancer receiving Gaṅgā on his locks, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., from Garuḍa temple, Ālampūr.
- M Fig. 28 Śiva in *lalita* pose from the façade of the Svarga temple, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Ālampūr.
- M Fig. 29 Detail of Śiva in *lalita* pose, from the façade of Svarga temple, Ālampūr.
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- M Fig. 32 Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *Lalita*, early Western Chālukya, Saṅgameśvara temple, Kundaveli, A.P.
- M Fig. 33 Śiva dancing with Kālī, from ceiling, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Saṅgameśvara temple.
- M Fig. 34 Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*, from south niche of temple, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Saṅgameśvara temple.

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- M Fig. 35 Naṭarāja in temple niche in a field near the village, Eastern Chālukya, 10th century A.D., Biccavolu.
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- M Fig. 37 Pallava cave with Naṭarāja sculpted on a pillar, Pallava, early 7th century A.D., Siyamaṅgalam.
- M Fig. 38 Śiva dancing in *bhujāṅga* pose, from pillar in a cave, Pallava, early 7th century A.D., Siyamaṅgalam.
- M Fig. 39 Śiva dancing on Apasmāra on *vimāna*, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Dharmarājaratha, Mahābalipuram.
- M Fig. 40 Śiva as Viṇādhara on *vimāna*, 7th century A.D., Pallava, Dharmarājaratha, Mahābalipuram.
- M Fig. 41 Śiva as Viṇādhara on first tier of *vimāna*, Dharmarājaratha, Pallava, mid 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.
- M Fig. 42 Śiva dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*, late 7th century A.D., Pallava, Kailāsa temple, Kāñchīpuram.
- M Fig. 43 Śiva dancing in *ālīḍha*, late 7th century A.D., Pallava, Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.
- M Fig. 44 Śiva dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*, late 7th century A.D., Pallava, Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.
- M Fig. 45 Śiva dancing in *lalāṭatilaka* pose, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.
- M Fig. 46 Śiva dancing in *ālīḍha*, late 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.

- M Fig. 47 Śiva dancing in *lalāṭatilaka*, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.
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- M Fig. 50 Painting of Devī under umbrella standing watching Śiva's dance, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Panamalai.
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- M Fig. 53 Multi-armed Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, Pallava, early 9th century A.D., Nallūr.
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- M Fig. 55 Four-armed Śiva dancing, carving from cave temple, early Pāṇḍya, 7th century A.D., Tirumalaipuram, Tirunelveli.
- M Fig. 56 Devī and celestials watching Śiva dancing to the accompaniment of music, Early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Tirupparamkunram.
- M Fig. 57 Four-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*, Early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Tirupparamkunram.
- M Fig. 58 Śiva dancing, early Pāṇḍya, 9th century A.D., Śevilipatti.
- M Fig. 59 Multi-armed Śiva dancing with legs crossed in *pādasvastika*, from rock-cut cave, Early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Kunnakuḍi.
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- M Fig. 61 Śiva dancing with the right leg raised in *rajaṭasabhā* in Madurai, early Pāṇḍya, 10th century A.D., Poruppumettupatti, Madurai Distt. This is a fine representation of Śiva's dance in reversed pose in the *rajaṭasabhā* at Madurai.
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Early Chera

- M Fig. 63 Façade of the cave showing Tripurāntaka and dancing Śiva and Devī, Early Chera, 8th-9th century A.D., Viḷiñjam.
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- M Fig. 65 Śiva dancing in *pristhasvastika*, Noḷamba, 9th century A.D., Hemāvatī, Madras Museum.
- M Fig. 66 Eight-armed Naṭarāja on pillar, Noḷamba, 9th-10th century A.D., from Hemāvatī Temple.
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Rāshtrakūṭa

- M Fig. 68 Śiva dancing with a graceful twist in the body, from cave 14, Laṅkeśvara, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Ellora.
- M Fig. 69 Śiva dancing on large-sized Apasmāra, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa, Ellora.
- M Fig. 70 Śiva dancing in *chatura* on Apasmāra as in cave 30, Cave 16, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Laṅkeśvara, Ellora.
- M Fig. 71 Śiva playing *ghaṭa*, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa temple, Ellora.
- C.P. Fig. 72 Painting of Devī under umbrella standing watching Śiva's dance, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Panamalai.
- C.P. Fig. 73 Śiva dancing in *lalita*, mural in colour, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Nandimaṇḍapa, Kailāsa temple, Ellora.

Choḷa

- C.P. Fig. 74 Painting of Naṭarāja in the golden hall in Chidambaram temple, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- C.P. Fig. 75 Painting of celestial musicians and dancers, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
- M Fig. 76 Naṭarāja from Bhoganandiśvara temple, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nandi, Andhra Pradesh.
- M Fig. 77 Naṭarāja from Bhoganandiśvara temple, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Nandi, Andhra Pradesh.
- M Fig. 78 Naṭarāja, Early Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Okkūr, Distt. Tañjāvūr, Madras Museum.
- M Fig. 79 Naṭarāja in *chatura* dance, Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Tiruvaraṅguḷam, National Museum.
- M Fig. 80 Naṭarāja, early Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Taṇḍantottam, Tañjāvūr Distt.
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- M Fig. 82 Naṭarāja, early Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Taṇḍantottam, Tañjāvūr Distt.
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- M Fig. 89 Naṭarāja dancing, early Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tiruvālangāḍu, Madras Museum.
- M Fig. 90 Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundarī, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.
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- M Fig. 92 Naṭarāja, early Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Metropolitan Museum, New York.
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- M Fig. 95 Dakṣiṇāmūrti with *jaṭābhāra*, from Choḷiśvara temple, early Choḷa, 10th century A.D.
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- M Fig. 97 Śiva and Nandi, Pallava, 4th century A.D., Bezvāḍa Museum.
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- M Fig. 101 Naṭarāja, Choḷa, 12th century A.D., Tirttanagarī.
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- Kākatīya**
- M Fig. 135 Naṭarāja bronze, Eastern Chāḷukya-Kākatīya transition, 11th-12th century, Drākshārāma.
- M Fig. 136 Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, Kākatīya, 12th century A.D., from ceiling of Rāmappa temple, Pālampet, Hyderabad Museum.
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- M Fig. 137 Gaṇeśa playing flute while other celestials play orchestra for Śiva dancing, Reḍḍi, 14th century A.D., Śrīśailam.
- M Fig. 138 *Sandhyātāṇḍava* of Śiva, rock-cut, Reḍḍi, 14th century A.D., Śrīśailam.
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- M Fig. 141 Śiva's dance on a snake, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., painting, Tiruvalaṇḍuḷi, Taṇjāvūr Distt.
- M Fig. 142 Viṣṇu, Indra, Brahmā and Sarasvatī playing orchestra for dancing Śiva, painting, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Tiruvalaṇḍuḷi, Taṇjāvūr Distt.

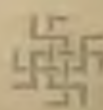
M	Fig. 143	Śiva dancing to the joy of the ṛishis watching, painting, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Tiruvalaṅḡuḡi.
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Medieval Kerala

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Chapter 14

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NATARAJA—THE LORD OF DANCE

The composer of an inscription has said, and probably, in a normal sense, rightly, that dance in the darkness is an impossibility. Let kings compose hundreds of mellifluous poems, or churn up hosts of foes on the battlefield, or scatter their wealth on deserving donees, but with the passage of time all these their exploits would be like dancing in utter darkness if these were not recorded by poets in *praśastis*: *kurvantu kīrtanaśatāni raṇāṅgaṇeṣhu mathnantu vairinikaram dhanam utsṛijantu kālāntare tad akhilam prabā-lāndhakāraṇityopamam kavijanair anibaddhya-mānam* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 27, p. 281).

Dance in the darkness is no doubt unimaginable. But, Śiva only chooses the evening for his dance, when it is dark, but the darkness is lit up by his own effulgence, the moon on his crest, the stars around, the flame in his hand, and the powerful rays shooting forth from the gems on the hoods of snakes he wears as his ornaments. This is abundantly illustrated in literature, as stated elsewhere, to show how Śiva requires not a powerful light focussed on him, but the mild and soft tone of moonlight, chosen to reveal not too luridly, but softly and gracefully, the movement of his limbs.

Śiva's dance cannot be comprehended by lesser masters. It is only the great ones like Brahmā, Bharata, Hari, Nārada or Skanda who can understand or appreciate his dance. An inscription on the cave temple at Śāluvaṅkuppam has a verse to elucidate not only the distinction of Śiva's dance, but also to enumerate the great celestial exponents of *nāṭya* and *saṅgīta* and their ability, as the right audience, to appreciate Śiva's dance: *yadi na vidhātā bharato yadi na harir nārado na vā skandah boddhum ka iva samarthas saṅgītam kālakālasya* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 10, p. 12). The word used here *saṅgīta* includes music, both vocal and instrumental, and dance. Poetry, music, literature and dance are time arts, while painting, sculpture and architecture are space arts (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th Edition, Vol. X). The word *Kālakāla*, emphasising the concept of time and eternity of Śiva, appropriately



FIG. 1. Śiva and devī dancing to the accompaniment of orchestral music by Gaṇas (sketch after author's fancy in early Chōla style of 1000 A.D.)

makes him the master of *saṅgīta*, including music and dance. Ratnākara goes one step further, when he describes even elements like water, personified in the heavenly stream, Gaṅgā, on his head, applauding, as he imagines, his excellence in dance. Śiva's dance movements, wherein he excels, are loudly applauded it would seem by the deep rumbling sound of the waves of the heavenly stream entering the hollows of the garland of skulls on his head: *kukshipravishṭasuranirjharīṇītarāṅga-jhāṅkāratāraninadair nṛikapālapanṅktiḥ nṛittakri-yāsu vidadhāviva sādhuvādam yasyottamāṅgabhuvi sātīśayāsvamandam* (*Haravijaya* 2.57).

It is not only these great gods and goddesses, the creators each in his or her own important way, that are the witnesses to applaud the dance of Śiva, but they enthusiastically also join in creating the orchestra for him, by playing the musical instruments. At the very sign of his brow, Viṣṇu takes up the drum *mardala*, which, with its noble rumbling notes, like the cloud inspiring the blue-throated peacock to dance, starts the musical sound. With his lotus hands, Brahmā takes up a pair of cymbals, ostensibly to keep time to the dance of the victor of Kāma, but really because they allow his mistaking them for the breasts of his consort, Sarasvatī. Indra places the bamboo

flute on his lip, the honey of which was lovingly tasted by the celestial nymph, Rambhā, and even by the excellence of his playing, which keeps the worlds spell-bound, Indra makes himself conspicuous in his high station. Sarasvatī, the consort of Brahmā, beautifully plays the lute with the rosary placed on her left ear, as if to suggest a faster pace in the musical play. Pārvatī smiles at the impatience of her beloved one (Śiva) to dance, as he gets ready by tying up his locks with the long snake coil and his waist with the elephant hide. Śambhu, the kind-hearted, knowing that his dance festival was not to be comprehended by the mortal eye, graciously bestows divine sight for those who lack it. Then the whole concourse witnesses the dance of Śiva, with the locks whirling around and lashing clusters of stars, as his feet with the serpent anklet, jingling at his tread, pushes down the earth: *tatra śaṅkara-kaṭākshachoditas chārumardalam avādayaddhariḥ yaḥ payoda iti pushkarāśrito nīlakaṇṭhāṇaṇochitadhvaniḥ kāmajinnāṇanākāraṇena vā bhāratikuchayugabhramena vā tatra tālayugalīm athādade pāṇipāṅkajayugena padmabhūḥ rambhayā hṛitarase radachchade vamsānālam avasajya vāsavaḥ vādanād api vimohayan janān ādade kila na vāsavasthitam vādaya drutam itīva śamsatā sphātikākshavalayena dakṣiṇe āśritā śravasi chāruvallakivādanam vyatanute priyā vidheḥ āyatena phaṇinā jaṭābharam madhyabhāgam ibhacharmakakshyayā badhnataḥ priyatamasya nartitum vīkshya sambhramam umā smitam vyadhāt vīkshaṇochitam apāmsachakshushā nartanotsavam avekshitum nijam śambhunā sakaladehinām tadā divyam akṣi didiṣe dayālunā sanda-darśa sapadī bhramajjaṭātādītōdupaṭalam tadā janah vyālānūpuraraṇatpadārpaṇanyañchitakṣhiti naṭeśa-nartanam (Patañjalīcharita 4. 61-67).*

As Śiva commences his dance in the evening, Ratnākara imagines, in the loftiest terms the sun and moon as the cymbals used by the goddess of prosperity herself for *tāla* and *laya*, the most important in the *nṛtta* aspect of dance. At the commencement of dance by Śiva at dusk, with the sun disc setting near the *astagiri* and the full moon emerging into light from his locks, it seems to make the celestial goddess of prosperity hold as it were these two as cymbals for the Lord's musical orchestra: *astāvalambiravibimbitayodayādrichūḍonmishatsakalachandratayā cha sāyam sandhyāpranṛttaharavādyagrihitakāmsyātāladvayeva samalakshyata nākalakshmīḥ* (Hara-vijaya 19. 5).

This exacting musical orchestra, the *vīṇā* played by the Lady of music, Sarasvatī herself,

the flute by Indra who excels, Brahmā keeping time and Viṣṇu himself sounding the drum, is because Śiva himself is an adept in all the musical instruments. In the *Śivasahasranāma*, there is an elaboration of his musical accomplishments. He is described as Sarvatūryaninādī, he is also Vaināvī, Paṇavī, Vīṇī, Tālī and Nālī: *vaiṇāvī paṇavī kālāḥ kālakaṇṭhaḥ kaṭamkaṭaḥ ... vīṇī cha paṇavī tālī nālī kalikaṭus tathā sarvatūryaninādī cha sarvavyāpyaparigrahaḥ* (Līngamahāpurāṇa 1, 65, 82, 84). *pratyayo gīta-sādhakaḥ* (Līngamahāpurāṇa, 1, 65, 11) *tumbuviṇo mahākopaḥ vamsāvādī hyaninditaḥ* (Līngamahāpurāṇa 1, 65, 21) *naikatānaratas svarāḥ* (Līngamahāpurāṇa 1, 65, 40). The commentary here explains *tumbu vīṇā* as the *vīṇā* provided with two gourds and popularly known as *Rudra vīṇā*. Śiva delights in innumerable *murchhanās* or *tānas*, and he is of the very nature of the *svaras*, not only *udātta*, *anudātta*, *svarita*, but the *saṅgīta svaras*, the seven famous notes. Śiva is also called Rathagīta: *akshayo rathagītas cha* (Līngamahāpurāṇa 1, 65, 44). *Ratha* is *Rathantarāsāma*, by the chant of which he is invoked. Śiva's fondness for *Sāma* is very well known.

From tradition, it is very clear that the dance of Śiva is mainly associated with several ṛishis, like Patañjali, Vyāghrapāda, Agastya, Durvāsa, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanat-kumāra, and others. Rāmabhadra Dīkshita gives a graphic description of the raised foot of Śiva in his *bhujāṅgatrāsita* mode of dance at Chidambaram. Śiva's performance of *karaṇas*, making up *aṅgahāras*, which go along with his whirling movements in forming *maṇḍalas*, scatters a spray of water from the heavenly stream on his head, bathing and purifying, as it were, the entire space around, packed with spectators. The rapid swirl of his arms raises blasts, resounding in the caverns of the mountains of the quarters, while the light from his raised lotus foot, creates a halo of light around him, fully observed only by the side-long glances of Devī, whose dark eyes are twins it would seem of the blue lotus. As Śiva dances with the universe as his theme, he almost lets fall the curtain of illusion, mystifying like Śambara's, when soon he reveals the truth to Patañjali, Vyāghrapāda and the other ṛishis, 'This is the illusion of the world as you see it here, and you will now know the eternal truth of the supreme Brahman, immanent, beginningless, eternal, sentient and blissful, unending and monistic: *maṇḍalabhramishu kīrṇajāhnavīśikarasnāpitachakravālakam bāhuvegāpavanāvapūritakrandadantaradiga-*

drikandaram uddhṛitaikacharaṇāmbujaprabhāsṛīyamānapariveshavigraham utpalodarasahodarāmbikālochanāntavalanaikagocharam śāmbariyavanikām athākshipan saprapañchamayanartanam śivaḥ drāḡadarśayata goṇikāsutam vyāghrapādam itarān ṛishīn api tena te svayam idam jagan mṛishā jānate sma paramārthataḥ punaḥ brahma tat param anādi sachchidānandalakṣhaṇam anantam advayam (Patañjalīcharita 4. 70-73).

Like a musician, who, during his song, stops for a while, and draws attention to the *tāla* or the rhythm beat, Śiva the great dancer, pauses for a while, to sound the drum himself in between, to show the correct adjustment when necessary. Kshemendra describes the patting of the universal lotus by Śiva by a play on the word *pushkara*, to suggest his beat of the drum *tāla*. The concept is so lofty that it makes even mountain Meru only a small part of the universal lotus. Sportively the hand of the Lord of Pramathas (Śiva) pats the universal lotus, thus signifying the proper musical time beat, the lotus which has the golden Meru mountain as its seed vessel, the twinkling stars as the pollen filaments, the dark moving clouds, the resounding bees, and the vast horizon, the lotus leaves: *suvarṇagirikarṇake taralātārakākesare chalajjaladashaṭpade sphuṭadigantapatrāstrite sa vaḥ pramathanāyakaḥ pradīśatu śriyam yatkarah karoti jagadambuje chalitātālilāyitam (Bṛīhatkathāmañ-jarī, p. 215, 1).*

A sculpture from Rajasthan, actually showing Śiva patting the drum as he dances, and a Dakṣiṇāmūrti from Kaḷugumalai, playing the drum and acting as Mṛidaṅga Dakṣiṇāmūrti, are excellent examples to illustrate this point.

Śiva's fondness for dance, as for music, is clear in the epithets in the *Śivasahasranāma*. He is called Nṛityapriya, Nityanṛitya, Nartana and Sarvasādhaka: *nṛityapriyo nityanṛityo nartanas sarvasādhakaḥ (Līngamahāpurāṇa 1, 65, 74).*

Śiva's epithets based on his love of music and dance are repeated in other *Purāṇas* as well. A salutation to Śiva is couched entirely in praise of his musical qualities. He is called *Nṛityaśīla*, meaning that it is his wont to dance, as he is very fond of both orchestral music and dance—*Vāḍyanṛityapriya*. He is also *Gītaśīla*. He always hums a tune and beautiful music at that, *sugītī, sugītim gāyan—namostu nṛityaśīlāya vāḍyanṛityapriyāya cha manyave gītaśīlāya sugītim gāyate namaḥ (Vāyupurāṇa 24, 142-143).*

He is also called *Nartanaśīla*, habituated to dance. He is extremely fond of dance and music, both vocal and instrumental, as an offering of worship. His very limbs are composed of music, vocal and instrumental and dance, and he is the beloved of musicians and instrumentalists. He is *Śilpīśa*, the lord of musical artists, foremost among the *śilpīs*, and the very progenitor of all fine arts, *sarvaśilpapravartakaḥ: namo nartanaśīlāya mukhavāḍitrakāriṇe nātyopahāralubdhāya gītavāḍyaratāya cha (Vāyupurāṇa 30, 198-199); gītavāḍitrāṇṛityāṅgo gītavādanakapriyaḥ (Vāyupurāṇa 30, 248).*

As he is so fond of dance as offering in worship, it is described as very prominent in ritual. The ṛishis extol Śiva, not only by the chant of the three *Vedas*—the *Rig*, *Yajus* and *Sāma*—but also by dance and music offerings, by the utterance of *praṇava*, *humkāra* and prostration: *archanāḍibhiḥ omkārahumnamaskārair archayanti sadāśivam (Vāyupurāṇa 54, 6).*

Music and dance (*Gāndharvaveda*), being one of the eighteen *vidyās*, is given a high place, and Śiva is its greatest exponent. The greatest masters of dance are, therefore, not only enumerated but described as always in attendance on the trinity—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—who are the three great exponents of dance. Naturally, dance is a great offering for Śiva in worship, as he delights in it, and is music and dance personified. The great exponents are not only Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, but also Indra, Ādityas, Rudras, Vasus and scores of other celestials, like Gandharvas, Hamsa, the highest of the Vidyādhara, Hāhā, Hūhū, Bṛīhaspati, Tumburu, Viśvāvasu and Apsarases, like Menakā, Sahajanyā, Parṇinī, Puñjikasthalā, Ghṛitasthalā, Ghṛitāchī, Viśvāchī, Pūrvāchī, Pramlochā, Anumlochanti, Urvaśī (*Vāyupurāṇa 69, 46-51*).

It is this aptitude for dance that has given the dance aspect of Śiva prominence in his name Naṭarāja or Nartēśvara. He is known as Nartēśvara in the north, and the term is actually used in the inscription on the pedestal of one of the most magnificent creations of the Naṭarāja image in Pāla art, from Bharella, near Dacca. He is styled, however, Nṛitteśvara in Īśānavarman's Sambor Prei Kuk inscription from Cambodia. Śiva is known as Āḍavallān in Chōla inscriptions, as he excels in dance, and a whole district is called Nityavinoda, the eternal pleasure of dance of Śiva. He dances eternally. That is why he is Nityanṛitya and

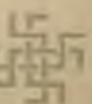
the embodiment of dance, which explains the name Nartana. He is the only one who can dance both *tāṇḍava* and *lāśya*. *Lāśya*, with the main emphasis on *Kaiśikī*, is best only in feminine performance, but Śiva excels even here. That is why he is *Sārvasādhaka*. He can, in his form, divide *tāṇḍava* and *lāśya* and while one half of his form shows the violent mode of dance, the other portrays the softer part of it. Śiva, however, is handicapped by the fact that there is nothing in the world beyond him, as his immanence precludes his existence beyond it, and dance is a portrayal of the three worlds. But even in rendering himself, Śiva excels. Śiva's dance is only the dance rendering of himself, there being nothing in the three worlds, apart from him, which would answer *trailokyānukṛiti*. That is why Ratnākara sings the glory of Śiva, 'O my Lord Śaṅkara, you, who in your immanence, exist by encompassing the entire universe, mobile and immobile, only rendering yourself as you dance on all the nights, elaborate the modes of *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* and their usage: *karaṇāṅgahāra* *vidhibhis* *savistarais* *sakalāsu* *śaṅkara* *niśāsu* *nṛityatā* *kṛiyate* *tvayā* *vikṛitir* *ātmano* *vibho* *sacharācharam* *jagad* *avāpya* *tasthushaḥ* (*Haraviṇaya* 6. 180).

Śiva being hermaphrodite has the unique opportunity to combine *rasas* in a special *bhāvaśabalatā*. He thus obviates the necessity to restrict himself to only *śṛiṅgāra* or *raudra*. As *lāśya* has *śṛiṅgāra* as its main theme, and *tāṇḍava*, *raudra*, Śiva combines both, and illustrates these two major *rasas*, a very difficult process indeed, as difficult of performance as of comprehension by an audience. As Patañjali tellingly puts it elsewhere that the pupil was Indra and the teacher Bṛihaspati, Śiva himself is here the dancer, and the audience the rest of the great gods. A beautiful description of Śiva's classical beauty as *Ardhanārīśvara*, is given in the copper-plate of Dharmapāla of Prāggyotisha, where the primal god, the Lord of half a youthful damsel, poses with ear lobes decorated with a blue lotus in one and the gems on the serpent hood on the other, and with the torso symmetrically divided by the high full feminine breast tinged with fragrant crimson, the masculine half ash-smearred, as if it were the commingling of the two flavours, *śṛiṅgāra* and *raudra*: *vande tam ardhayuvatiśvaram ādidevam indivaroragaphaṇāmaṇikarṇapūram uttuṅgapīnakuchakuṅkumabhasmabhinnam śṛiṅgāraraudrarasayor iva sargam ekam* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 30, p. 205).

Śiva is not only the Lord of *tāṇḍava* and

lāśya in both varieties of *nṛitta* and *nṛitya*, but he is also the Lord of *nāṭya*. He is the actor on the world stage, the *Mahāśailūsha*, as he is known and called sometimes. He is styled *Nāṭakeśvara* in the Prasat Ta Keo inscription of Sūryavarman from Cambodia. Even here on the stage, in following the dialogue and theme of a *nāṭaka*, the actor has to follow the principles of *nṛitya*, and by the language of gesture convey the sense of the text of the drama as the actor. There are elaborate injunctions as to how a *dṛiśya kāvya*, like the *nāṭaka*, has to be indicated by dance or *nṛitya* and *abhinaya*. The stage directions in Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary, *Arthadyotanika* on *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, would make this very clear. Coomaraswamy has illustrated a few points in his introduction to the *Mirror of Gesture*, the *nalina-padmakōśa* hands, palms downwards, for watering of a tree, moving the head quickly to and fro, *vidhuta*, lips quivering, hands in *patāka* unsteadily against the face to show fear of a bee, and so forth (*Mirror of Gesture*, pp. 4-5). It is this mystery of Śiva's dance and association of Śiva as tutelary deity of *Nāṭya* that accounts for the mention of several presentations of innumerable danseuses to Śiva temples in India and in other parts of South East Asia. The classical instance is the gift of four hundred dancing girls to the temple of the Lord of dance, Āḍavallān, in the shrine of Rājārājeśvara at Tañjāvūr, with recorded elaborate provision for their maintenance provided by the emperor Rājārāja. The Badaun inscription of Lakhanapāla mentions how, dance forming a vital and vivid part of temple worship ritual, the ascetic *rājaguru* *Iśānaśiva* caused adequate provision to be made for this perpetual daily worship. The world would be wonderstruck at the elaborate details of the great worship, causing almost a holy giddiness, with the utmost praise propitiating the Beloved of the Mountain-princess in daily ritual, the danseuses dancing, scattering flowers to the sound of music of the orchestra, heightened by the sweet sound of the lute, like the hum of the bees, drowned by the clang of the temple bells in action: *tūryānām sanninādair madhukaramadhurair vallakīspṛiṭagītair ghaṇṭāsamghaṭṭaghoshaiḥ kusumaparimalair nartanair nartakīnām yasminnatyantabhaktyā mahati girisutāvallabham nityarītyā bhrāntiḥ pāvitrīkī syād atibahalamahāpūjayā viśmitānām* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 1, p. 66).

In a copper plate of Prabhūtarsha, the temple ritual, including elaborate offering of dance by danseuses, is mentioned. The poet



of the inscription shows how the audience in the temple was so appreciative that it was captivated by the excellence of the performance. The temple of Kaṇṇeśvara, where the young women of the city were enthralled by the dances of moon-faced girls, skilled in gestures, indicated by their sprout-like hands, conveying their sentiments and emotions at the time of the *dhūpa*, is a passage of importance, showing how in medieval India, the Lord of dance was propitiated by appropriate provision of danseuses in temples: *dhūmavelālilā-gatavilāsinījanānām karatalakīsalayarasabhāvasadbhāvaprakāṣanakuśalaśaśivadanāṅganānartanāhṛita-paurayuvatiṇachittāntaram* (Epigraph. Ind. 4, p. 342). In the Deopara inscription of Vijaya-sena, it is described in a humorous poetic vein, how Śiva, the Lord of only half a woman, was provided by the Sena sovereign with a number of moon-faced damsels well versed in dance: *ucchitrāṇi digambarasya vasanānyardhānganāsvāmīno ratnālankṛitibhir viśeṣhitavapuśśobhāśatam subhruvaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 305).

An early Eastern Gaṅga inscription of Aniyaṅka Bhīma, from Bhubaneśvar, incised in the Svapneśvara temple, gives a sparkling vision painted in words of the danseuses, presented to Tripurahara Śiva Svapneśvara, whose moving side-long glances are spells to captivate the universe, whose footsteps in dance still the motion of all the denizens of the three worlds, whose gem-set bracelets shoot forth the illumination of a thousand lamps without effort, at the commencement of their dance: *yasminnetrāñchalataralimā viśvavaśyaikamantraḥ pādanyā-sas tribhubanagatistambhanam samvidhatte nṛityārambhe valayamaṇibhir nirmītaratnadīpas tasmā dattās tripurajayine tena tāstā mṛigākshyaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 6, p. 202).

Śiva being the main source of dance, interpretation of *karāṇas* and *aṅgaḥāras*, created by Viṣṇu by his movements as he engaged Madhu and Kaiṭabha in battle, have been the main source of inspiration for the entire text on the dance forms by Bharata and others. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* clearly says that Bharata prepared the text, based mainly on what he saw as the interpretation of *rechakas*, *karāṇas* and *aṅgaḥāras*, as Śiva danced and, by word of mouth, explained their nuances: *rechakair aṅgaḥārais cha nṛityantam vīkshya śaṅkaram ityapi bruvatā spāṣṭam tad eva muninā kṛitam* (Nāṭyaśāstra 4. 257).

The dance of Śiva, both as a sight for the eyes to experience and for the ears to hear, in

regard to the rhythmic tap of the feet, in consonance with the orchestral sound, are picturesquely presented as it were, one by Dhanapāla and the other by Trivikrama. Dhanapāla imagines a battle array, with thousands of flags fluttering, swayed by blasts of wild wind, appearing like the *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva: *sakhaṇḍaparaśutāṇḍava iva prachāṇḍāniladhutadh-vajasahasraiḥ* (Tilakamañjarī 2, p. 203). Dhanapāla is very fond of Kāñchī and the south. He is surely recalling the innumerable flames, like flags on the *maṇḍala* around Naṭarāja, a peculiar feature in the south in the representation of the dancing Śiva. In the line previous to this, he refers to flame weapons exactly like these, like the flash of lightning fast approaching *śakti* weapons, all a flame. This effect of innumerable flames, as in a battlefield, suggests not only a normal pleasureable dance but something more, the dance of victory on the battlefield, where the greatest opponents, like the Tripuras, are overcome by the dark flames as weapons. The play of flames in Tripura-samhāra is itself very picturesquely painted in a famous verse where *bhayānaka*, *raudra* and *śṛiṅgāra* are commingled. May the flames from the darts of Śiva destroy all evil, flames, that like a faithless lover caught erring, are discarded by the youthful tear-stained lotus-eyed damsels from the seraglio of the Tripuras, thrown aside, caught on their hand, violently shaken as they pulled at the hem of the garments, flung aside as they caught their dresses, not even observed in their embarrassment, even when fallen at their feet, shaken off as they tried to embrace and envelop them: *kshīpto hastāvalagnaḥ prasabham abhīhato pyādadā-nomśukāntam gṛiṇṇan keśeshvapāstas charaṇanīpatito nekshitas sambhrameṇa āliṅgan yovadhūtas tripurayuvatibhis sāśrunetrotpalābhīḥ kāmivārdrāparādhasa dahatu duritam śāmbhavo vas śarāṅgīḥ* (Amarukam 2).

Even the arrow of Śiva is described as dancing, particularly that of Tripurāntaka. It is very appropriate because the arrow of Śiva is made up of both Agni and Viṣṇu. The flame of fire is a great dancer, indeed, and Viṣṇu created the lovely *vṛittis* which constitute the element of charm in dance. Like Brahmā and Śiva, Viṣṇu is also a great *āchārya* or preceptor of dance. The verse of Vaidya Gadādhara is a picturesque description of Tripurāntaka's arrow as a dancer. The flame of arrow performs the *tāṇḍava* dance, removing the enveloping curtain of smoke for entering the stage, scatters a handful of flowers in the guise of sparks of

fire all over, and lightly stepping on the wide expanse of the mansions of the three cities, created by Maya, completely envelopes the aspect of the emotion of terror, multiplying in all directions: *vishvag vyādhūya dhūmaprachayaya-vanikām sphāyamānasphuliṅgavyājād ākīrya push-pāñjalim upari padam nyasyato mandirānām svachchhandābhogasīmā mahati mayapure dattaraudrāngarāgavyāptāśeshasya viśveśvaraśaraśikhinas tāṇḍavam naḥ punātu* (*Saduktikarṇāmritam*, p. 23, 78).

The sound of Śiva's dance steps also again recalling the rhythm in martial music is conceived in equally picturesque fashion, where Trivikrama compares the tap sound of Śiva's dance steps to that of the hoofs of the horse on the move, appearing to exercise themselves in the technique of Śiva's dance steps themselves: *chaṭulakhurachārīprachāreṇāḍambaritatāṇḍavasya khaṇḍaparaśoḥ padalilām ivā' bhyasyatā... jātyataraturagasainyena parivṛitaḥ* (*Nalachampū* 6, pp. 373-74).

A Kākatīya inscription gives exactly the same simulation of Śiva's dance steps to similar tap of the hoofs of the equestrian regiment marching forth to battle.

In early Tamil literature, there is elaborate description of Śiva's martial dance. Śiva as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Gaṅgādhara, Kālikātāṇḍava, Viṇādhara, Tripurāntaka, Gajāntaka, Brahmaśiraśchettā, is fused in the concept of the dancing Śiva in the company of Devī, the witness of his dance, who keeps time and applauds, in the invocation to the early Tamil poem *Kalittokai*. Here Śiva, who taught the *Vedas* and *Vedāṅgas* to the seers, scattered fire on the Tripuras, contested in dance with Kālī, created music from his drum, is described as dancing, in his joy of victory, the *Koṭṭi*, *Paṇḍaraṅga* and *Kapāla* dances, eight-armed, wearing the tiger skin and with the skull of Brahmā in his hand, as Devī of lovely form, with attenuated waist, drooping shoulders and perfumed locks, attracting bees, watches the time beat: *āru ari āntaṇarkku aru marai pala pakarntu teru nīr chaṭaik karantu tirupuram tī maṭuttu kūrāmal kurittatan mel chellum kaṭuṇ kūlī mārāp por maṇi miṭarru en kaiyāy keḷ in paṭuparai pala iyampa pal uruvam peyarttu nī koṭikoṭṭi āṭunkāl koṭu uyar akal alkul koṭi purai nuchuppināl koṭa chīr taruvālo maṇṭu amar pala kaṭantu matukaiyāl nīru aṇintu paṇṭaraṇkam āṭumkāl paṇai eḷil aṇai men tol vaṇṭu ararrum kūntalāl vaḷar tūkkut taruvālo kolai uluvait tol achaii konraitṭār chuvar puraḷa talai aṅkai koṭu nī kāpālam āṭumkāl mulai aṇinta muruvalāl mun*

pānitaruvālo pāṇiyum tūkkum chīrum eṇru ivai māṇ ilai arivai kāppa āṇam il poruḷ emakku amarṇtanai āṭi (*History of Tamil Literature* p. 154).

In fact, Śiva's dance in several instances is the dance of victory. There is a very early *yūpa* inscription from Nandsa, near Udaipur, mentioning the dance of victory. The word used is Jayanartana. This auspicious name of king, very appropriately chosen, assures prowess to a prince as soon as he is born. Jayanartana can be the name of no other than Śiva himself, who danced the Tripurasamhāra and Gajasamhāra dance: *jayanartana-prabhāvardhanapautrasya jayasomaputrasya sominetus śrīso-masya* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 27, p. 263).

Jāya in describing dance closely correlates it with warfare and points out how *maṇḍalas*, *aṅgaḥāras* and music are essentials in both. A wise one should utilise in warfare, as well as in regular dance, the different *maṇḍalas* in their varieties, as well as pleasing *aṅgaḥāras* that captivate the mind, to the accompaniment of music: *etāni khaṇḍasahitānyapi maṇḍalāni līlāṅga-yashīmādhurāṇi manoharāṇi vādyānugāni vivadhāni budho niyuddhe yuddhetha nartanaividhau vidhivad vidadhyāt* (*Nṛitaratnāvali* 3. 197).

Jāya, the Commander of the armed forces of the Kākatīyas, who was himself an adept in fine arts, particularly, music and dance, besides being a poet, fancies Śiva the Lord of dance as the very embodiment of *nṛitya*. He, therefore, by a play on words, brings together the names of all the *karāṇas*, at the same time describing a situation of Śiva in dance, with his foot resounding with the anklet slipped on it by Pārvatī, bending forward to embrace him, with his hand holding the leaping deer, entwined by the quivering snake, joyously raising his knee in sport, to gently move aside the Nandī bull, come very close to him. Śiva, the lord of the daughter of the mountain, looks the very embodiment of dance *karāṇas*, like *valitoru*, *vartita*, *ākshipta*, *nūpura*, *krānta*, *hariṇapluta*, *bhujāṅgāñchita*, *pārśvakraṇta*, *apaviddha*, *vṛishabhakṛiḍa*, *ūrdhvajānu* and the rest: *āśliṣhyadvalitoruvartti-taśivākshiptasphurannūpurakrāntāmgghrim hariṇaplutaśrayakaram chañchadbhujāṅgāñchitam pārśvakraṇtapadāpaviddhavṛishabhakṛiḍordhvajānūtsukamvyā-chasṭe karāṇaugham adritanayākāntopamam jāyanaḥ* (*Nṛitaratnāvali* 4. 1).

In describing a situation like the dire need of the Devas to master a precious text of dancing by a specialist like Nandikeśvara in order

to overcome a great dancer representing the Daityas, the appellation given even to him is Naṭaśekhara. Indra requests Nandikeśvara to acquaint him with *Bharatārṇava* so that he could triumph over Naṭaśekhara. Naṭaśekhara means 'the crest jewel among dancers'. It is not very different from the appellation Naṭarāja for Śiva. Whether for the Daityas or for the Devas, the ideal has been the Lord of dance, Śiva-Narteśvara or Naṭarāja. In the *Śivapurāṇa*, Bāṇa, the great devotee of Śiva, is described as dancing his best to please Śiva who is never so overjoyed as when he listens to *Sāma* music and witnesses the best of dance. The story of Rāvaṇa, chanting the *Sāma* hymns in musical notes to please Śiva and get released from under the Kailāsa mountain where he got trapped by his own overweening pride, when he tried to shake the mighty mountain, is only too well known.

Music and dance can never be separated. In fact, *saṅgīta* includes music, both vocal and instrumental, and dance. There is very early mention of all these as *śilpa* (*Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇa* 29. 5). That is why Śiva is sometimes represented as the Lord of music with the lute and sometimes as a dancer carrying the lute. He also occasionally plays the drum independently, as the musical Dakṣiṇāmūrti, or sounds the drum dancing as Naṭarāja. When Kālidāsa says *saṅgītāya prahatamurajāḥ*—*saṅgīta* means not only instrumental and vocal music, *ātodya* and *gīta*, but also *nṛitya* or dance. By dance has to be understood not only pure *nṛitta*, composed of *tāla* and *laya*, but also *nṛitya* which expounds the text of the song through *abhinaya*. This brings into the scene literature. The sculpturesque position in dance and the beautiful situations in the stances of *aṅgahāras* and *karaṇas*, where the body beautiful looks much more so by the flexions, completely draws in the art of *chitra*, sculpture and painting, which give a permanent vision of fleeting, charming situations in dance. That is why Śiva, as Viṇādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti and as Naṭarāja, along with Vyākhyāna Dakṣiṇāmūrti, go together. Even in dance, it is not any theme that is favoured so much as a worthy theme, like the *Tripurasamhāra*, which is the greatest heroic episode appealing at once to literature, art, music and dance: *tripuravijayo gīyate kin-naribhiḥ* (*Meghadūta* 1.58). Tradition also has it that the first performance to popularise *nāṭya* among the gods was *Tripuravijaya*, witnessed and appreciated by Śiva himself. A very important early terracotta of the Śuṅga

period, representing Śiva as Viṇā Dakṣiṇāmūrti, emphasises the *saṅgīta* aspect of Śiva and in mute eloquence describes him as the teacher of music, vocal and instrumental, and dance. Centuries later, was created the more developed, charming, rare iconographic figure of Śiva, as Saptasvaramaya. Śiva from Parel is a form multiplied into seven to represent the personified musical notes, *nishāda*, *ṛishabha*, *gāndhāra*, *śaḍja*, *madhyama* and *dhaivata*. The Gaṇas themselves are shown at the feet, on either side, playing the four varieties of musical instruments that compose the *ātodya*, the stringed, *tata*, including the harp, lute and other *viṇā*-like instruments, the *ānaddha* like *mṛidaṅga*, *muraja*, *pushkara* and other varieties of drum, belonging to the percussion class, the *sushira* variety of wind instruments, like the flute and others, and the *ghana*, or clanging metallic cymbals and others of that type, both large and small. There can be no mistaking the intent of the Vākāṭaka sculptor who has portrayed the musical Śiva at Parel. It is one of the gems of Vākāṭaka art. The theme of Bhūtagaṇas playing musical instruments as orchestral accompaniment to Śiva's dance is a great favourite in literature as in art and in the *Tevāram* hymns of the early Tamil saints there are pictures conjured up, as by Tirujñānasambanda, who has Śiva or Ālaṅkāḍor, with the crescent moon, the mighty stream of Gaṅgā in his locks, dancing, as many Vedic chants are accompanied by the play of drum, flute and harp by the Bhūtagaṇas: *paraiyuñchirukkuḷalum yālumpūtam payirrave ma-ṛaiyum palapāṭi mayānattiraiyā maintanar pirai-yumperumpunalcher chaṭaiyinārum* (*Tevārattirupatikam* 45.6).

As the drum precedes the other musical instruments, both for music and for dance, the sounding of it by Nandī at the commencement of Śiva's dance becomes a favourite theme in literary descriptions. Mayūra has an interesting allusion to it. He compares it to the *praṇava* or *omkāra* at the commencement of Vedic chant. The sound of the *Nāndī* drum by Nandī at the start of the evening dance of the foe of Madana (Śiva), is like the first blast of winds in the season of laden clouds, like smoke before fire, like the first created (water) in the universe, like the sacred *Om* for the mass of Vedic literature, the son of Vinatā, i.e. Aruṇa at the front of the vehicle of Sūrya: *paurastyas toyadar-toḥ pavana iva pavan pāvakasyeva dhūmo viśvasyevādisargo praṇava iva param pāvano vedarāṣeḥ sandhyānṛityotsavechchhor iva madanaripor nandinān-*

*dinīnādas saurasyāgre sukham vo vitaratu vinatānan-
danas syandanasya (Mayūraśataka, 55).*

Śiva being the most auspicious, the orchestra itself, composed of *viṇā*, *veṇu* and *mṛidaṅga*, in turn serve the purpose of the great dance master, and are thus auspicious. Ratnākara records the ancient belief that the musical orchestra is a remover of *visha* or poison. Śiva as the greatest of physicians, *bhishaktama* among the *bhishajas*, the greatest among the physicians, as the *Veda* would have it, is the great God who swallowed the deadliest poison, *kālakūṭa*. Naturally, Śiva's orchestra of *viṇā*, *veṇu* and *mṛidaṅga*, can be held to be consecrated by *mantra* and remove all *visha* or poison. The general belief that consecrated musical instruments remove poison is thus voiced by Ratnākara: *prastauti mantrakṛitasamskṛitirūpaveṇuvīṇāravopī vishamasya vishasya nāśam (Haravijaya 16, 9)*. The learned commentator gives the authority for this belief: *mantraṇa kṛitasamskāram rūpam yasya viṇādes tadīyo ravo visham nāśayati; yad uktam—*‘*viṇāveṇumṛidaṅgadarpaṇataleshvāropitaḥ kīchako dashṭānām vishapaṅkalepam achirād dhyātas samutpumsayet*’ *iti*.

Kālidāsa conceives of a magnificent natural orchestra for Śiva, with no artificial instrument, but natural elements themselves combining to produce the effect of the four instruments composing *ātodya*. Filled with wind, the bamboos sound sweet with the effect of *veṇu* (flute), the resounding thunder of the cloud gives the effect of the noble note of the *muraja* drum, as vocal music is supplied by the sweet-throated *Kinnarīs*, singing in passionate earnestness the great theme of Śiva's triumph over the *Tri-puras*. Kālidāsa feels that this would complete the musical background for Paśupati's dance: *śabdāyante madhuram anilaiḥ kīchakāḥ pūryamā-
ṇās samraktābhis tripuravijayo gīyate kinnarībhiḥ
nīhrādas te muraja iva chet kandareshu dhvanis*

*syāt saṅgītārtho nanu paśupates tatra bhāvi samagraḥ
(Meghadūta 1. 56).*

So stupendous is the concept of the Lord of dance, *Natarāja*, so completely enveloping the universe, in which and as which he dances, an impossible situation indeed, where he is both the container and the contained, that his adoration through dance and music, which is itself part of temple ritual, is likened to lighting up the sun with a flame. Śūdraka laughs at this idea of adoring Śiva, the Lord of dance, by dance and music, as this is not different from the worship of the sun by waving the lamp before him, or the ocean by offering a handful of water, or *Vasanta*, the god of spring, by a scatter of blooming flowers, which is all the same as the adoration of the Lord of letters by utterances: *sūryam yajanti dīpais samudram adbhīr
vasantam api puṣhpaiḥ archāmo bhagavantam vāyam
api vāgīśvaram vāgbhiḥ (Padma-prābhṛitaka 11)*.

What is meant here is music, and *saṅgīta* necessarily brings in dance also, which is an offering to Śiva *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, who is also a dancer carrying the *viṇā*, symbolising music and dance. This idea closely follows the hymn from the *Upanishad*, *na tatra sūryo bhāti na
chandratārakam nemā vidyuto bhānti kutoyam agniḥ
tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam tasya bhāsā
sarvam idam vibhāti*. The ideas of Śiva about dance are manifest or unmanifest as there is no knowledge of dance or music or any other art or science apart from him. That is why, while appreciating the performance of *Samu-
dramathana* and *Tri-puradāha* by the celestials, Śiva tells Bharata that he had also been often contemplating as he danced in the evenings, on the beauty of *nāṭya* as he now witnessed it. He himself however had preference for *nṛitta* in the charming *Kaiśikī* mode. With an admixture of the perfection of *nṛitta* with its *aṅgahāras* and *karaṇas*, as taught to him by *Taṇḍu* at the instance of Śiva, Bharata improved his *nāṭya*.

NATYA



FIG. 1. A group of dancers: *karaṇas* and *aṅgaḥāras* (sketch after author's fancy in early Chola style of 1000 A.D.)

A Pleasant Ocular Sacrifice

The highest tribute to *nāṭya* has been paid by Kālidāsa, who describes it as a pleasant ocular sacrifice for the gods, as the sages consider it. Rudra has rendered it into two modes, the violent and the soft, in his body intermingled with that of Umā. In this, every act in the world, arising from the three-fold natural disposition and suggestive of varying moods is well represented. Dance alone in different ways is the one thing that pleases alike people of varied tastes: *devānām idam āmananti munayaḥ kāntam kratum chākshusham rudreṇedam umākṛitavyatikare svāṅge vibhaktam dvidhā traiguṇyodbhavam atra lokacharitam nānārasam dṛīsyate nāṭyam bhinnarucher janasya bahudhāpyekam samārāadhanam* (*Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 4). Indeed, in pronouncing the Nāndī, the Sūtra-dhara actually offers this as a sacrifice for the pleasure of the gods: *ijyayā chānayā nītyam prīyantām devatā iti* (*Nāṭyaśāstra* 5. 108).

Dance is not only a pleasant ocular sacrifice, but is also a popular happy adjunct to a regular sacrifice itself. Dance and music, particularly the chant of *Sāma* hymns to the tune of the *vīṇā*, was an essential factor in *yāgas*. One of the most graphic representations of Trivikrama's triumph over Bali (Fig. 2) on a Gupta architrave from Pawāyā, now in the Gwalior Museum, illustrates this very clearly, in an elaborate series of panels depicting various facets of Bali's *yāga*, with the horse stationed

near the *yūpa* post, the princesses watching from near the *yajñavāṭa*, the *ṛitvik* priests assembled, the musical orchestra as an accompaniment to dance. The variation of the shape of the *vīṇā* is also shown here, the guitar-like *kachchhapī* and the bow-shaped *saptatantrī*. The three-fold drum (*mṛidaṅga*) is also there, *tripushkara* as it is called, and the dancer's movement is a delicate stance of *aṅgaḥāra*. This famous dance scene itself is part of the celebrations of Bali's *yāga*, sacrifice, where Trivikrama enveloped the universe. The *viśvarūpa* of Trivikrama, a dazzling sight, with the *daṇḍapāda* raised above, is almost a *tāṇḍava* here, as a contrast to the soft and delicate *lāsyā* in the *kaiśikī* mode by the danseuse.

Its Scope

Dance being a supreme art, its scope, as explained by Bharata, embraces all the themes in life, which it vividly portrays. There is no theme possible of depiction in sculpture or painting not capable of being interpreted in the language of *nāṭya*. Indeed, the language of this great art is so subtle and developed, that minute shades of meaning can be expressed by mere dance and gesture, pose and movement of limbs, disposition of hands, the expressions of the face and the wealth of details suggested by the eyebrows and glances that move like ripples on the placid countenance, bubbling its surface into volcanic fury and action, or caressing it into soft sweet under-



FIG. 2. Dance and music as a pleasant ocular sacrifice and as an adjunct to regular sacrifice, here of Bali. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Pawāyā, Gwalior Museum.

tones of love and peace. Whether it is the depiction of human emotions and actions, or a representation of the habits of animals, or a portrayal of the leaves of trees rustling in the wind, or the play of the ripples in a silvery lake, a picture is all the same a mirror of one moment of some aspect of Nature's *nāṭya*. *Nāṭya* is thus a series of pictures, each picture being a moment of *nāṭya*. The *Vishṇudharmottara*, an early work with a chapter on painting, clearly points out the close connection between painting and dance. As in dance, so in art (sculpture and painting), it is a faithful delineation of the three worlds. The glances, moods and emotions, the movement of limbs major and minor, the disposition of the hands and fingers, as in dance, already explained, have also to be understood in art, as dance is a supreme expression of art: *yathā nṛitte tathā chitre trailokyānukṛitis smritā dṛishṭayaś cha tathā bhāvā aṅgopāṅgāni sarvaśah karās cha ye mayā nṛittee purvoktā nṛipasattama ta eva chitre vijñeyā nṛittam chitram param matam* (*Vishṇudharmottara*, 3. 35, 5-7). The close interrelationship between dance and sculpture is reiterated by Ratnākara by a play on words in a verse of his. The damsels captivated the audience, presenting, as they did, in dance as in sculpture, manifold picturesque stances and delicate movements of limbs: *vichitrasthānakopetāh sukumārāṅgavartanāh nṛitte chitre cha dadhatīr ākshiptahṛidayās striyaḥ* (*Haravijaya* 33. 3).

This close connection is specially noteworthy because the various *sthānas* and *karaṇas*, which are essential in *nāṭya*, are equally important in *chitra*, wherein beauty of pose is as important as beauty of form.

Purpose of Nāṭya

The scope of *nāṭya*, as seen from what it has to convey in its own language, is immense. What has been said of literature applies also to art and dance. Whatever injunction has been given almost as a mandate by the lordly *Veda*, or as good counsel by the *Purāṇa*, like a dear friend, is very pleasantly offered almost in a coaxing tone by *Kāvya* (literature) as by the beloved one herself, and the right action in life is thus assured: *yad vedāt prabhusammitāt adhigatam śabdapradhānāt chiram yachchārthapravaṇāt purāṇavachanāt iṣṭam suhṛit-sammitāt kāntāsammitayā yayā sarasatām asādyā kāvyaśriyā kartavye kutukī budho virachitas tasyai sprihām kurmahe* (*Pratāparudrayaśobhushaṇa* 1. 8).

Similarly, dance has a message for the audience that it exhorts to live the ideal life in the path of righteousness, prosperity and fame. With this purpose in view, Brahmā had created a noble art, *nāṭya*, as the fifth *Veda* in epic glory, saturated with all the essence of the most important schools of thought and fine arts. For these, as Bharata gives it, Brahmā chose the textual element from the *Rigveda*, music from the *Sāmaveda*, gesticulation from the *Yajurveda* and moods and flavours from the *Atharvaveda*. This is the famous traditional origin of *nāṭya* itself: *dharmyam arthyam yaśas-yam cha sopadeśyam saśaṅgraham bhaviṣhyataś cha lokasya sarvakarmānudarśakam sarvaśāstrārthasampannam sarvaśilpapravartakam nāṭyākhyam pañchamam vedam setihāsam karomyaham jagrāha pāṭhyam ṛigvedāt sāmabhyo gītam eva cha yajurvedād abhīnayan rasam ātharvaṇād api* (*Nāṭyaśāstra* 1. 14, 15 and 17).

Its Varieties: Tāṇḍava and Lāsya

It is this legend of the origin of *nāṭya* that has been amplified by the mention of the classification of *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* by Śiva and Pārvatī in Dhanañjaya's verse, where the whole process of creation of this great art is portrayed. Sifting and collecting the essence of all the *Vedas* with meticulous care, Brahmā created a new *Veda*, the *Nāṭyaveda*, the exposition of which was recorded by the sage Bharata. Of this, the blue-throated Śiva gave a demonstration of *tāṇḍava*, the violent aspect, while Śarvāṇī gave a lucid exposition of *lāsya*, the softer mode. Where even these great celestials have chosen only portions for elucidation can there be any so ambitious as to completely analyse the entire gamut of the art? *uddhṛityoddhṛitya sāmam yam akhīlanigaman nāṭyavedam viriñchis chakre yasya prayogam munir api bharatas tāṇḍavam nilakanṭhaḥ śarvāṇī lāsyam asya pratipadam āparam lakshma kaḥ kartum īshṭe nāṭyānām kimtu kimchit praguṇarachanayā lakṣaṇam saṅkshipāmi* (Daśarūpaka I. 4).

The division of dance into two—the violent and the soft—*tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*—that Kālidāsa mentions is indeed the basis for understanding the *uddhata* and the *sukumāra* type as portrayed in the dance of Śiva and Pārvatī. Bharata has a clear picture of this exposition of the two types. Śiva danced exhibiting *rechakas*, *aṅga-hāras* and other dispositions of the limbs making up the network of the web of dance, and Pārvatī softly danced with a delicate touch, the same features more softly expressed, all to the accompaniment of the *mṛdaṅga*, *bherī*, *paṭaha*, *bhāṇḍa*, *ḍiṇḍima*, *gomukha*, *paṇava*, *dardura* and all the other requisite musical instruments, all at sunset: *rechakair aṅga-hārais cha nṛityantam vīkshya saṅkaram sukumāraprayogena nṛityantīm chaiva pārvatīm mṛdaṅgabherī-paṭahair bhāṇḍaḍiṇḍimagomukhaiḥ paṇavair durduraiḥ chaiva sarvātodyaiḥ pravāditaiḥ* (Nāṭyaśāstra 4. 249-251).

Starting even from the movement of the foot, i.e. *chārī*, it is violent *mahāchārī* for Śiva in expressing *raudra* in *tāṇḍava*, in which the Prama-thagaṇas also revel, while it is *chārī* for Devī as a soft expression of *śṛṅgāra* in *lāsya*: *tathā chāryām prayuktāyām umā tushṭā bhaved iha mahāchāryam prayuktāyām tushṭo bhūtagaṇo bhavet* (Nāṭyaśāstra 5. 52).

It is this that has elsewhere been described in literature, in the context of the dance of Ardhanārīśvara, as *lāsya* to the left, on the

side of Pārvatī, and *tāṇḍava* to the right, the masculine half of Śiva.

Mārga and Deśi Varieties

The graceful picture of the danseuses dancing for Śiva Mahākāla at the evening worship in the temple at Ujjain gives a special importance to the *deśi* type of folk dances which were favoured along with the *mārga* or classical type of *nṛitya*. With their hands fatigued by the gentle waving of *chaurīs*, the handles covered with the hue of the gems of their bracelets, their waist band resounding to their dance steps, the courtesans, experiencing rain drops so pleasant on the wounds of nail marks, would cast sidelong glances, dark like a long row of bees: *pādanyāsaiḥ kvaṇitarāśanās tatra līlāvadhū-taiḥ ratnachchhāyākhachitavalibhis chāmaraiḥ klān-tahastāḥ veśyās tvatto nakhapadasukhān prāpya var-shāgrabindūn āmokshyante tvayī madhukarāśreṇi-dīrghān kaṭākshān* (Meghadūta I. 35).

Mallinātha's commentary on this verse gives interesting insight into early types of folk dances. He quotes from the *Nṛityasarvasva* and enumerates such dances performed, holding a sword, or a ball, veil, rod, *chaurī*, garland, or lute, and styled *deśika nṛitya*: *taduktam nṛitya-sarvasve khaḍgakandukavastrādi daṇḍikāchāmaras-rajah vīṇām cha dhṛtvā yat kuryur nṛityam tad deśikam bhavet*.

The description of jingling waist band, the tinkling anklet bells, the measured steps in dance and the picturesque effect of the sword, bell, *chaurī* and other objects held in the hand, provides a graceful vision indeed of early folk dances which were as much favoured as the classical variety itself.

The Occasion for Dance

The occasion for dance is also very important when we judge its popularity in almost every function of importance in ancient India. It is specially associated with worship, and particularly with the worship of Śiva as Naṭarāja, the Lord of dance, where the *nāṭyamandapa* was specially devoted to the exposition of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* in the presence of the Lord of dance himself.

The significance of dance is clear by its occurrence in almost all major scenes of festivity. The *chūḍāmaha* or the festival of the adoration of Siddhārtha's turban or his enlightenment celebrated with dance and music, depicted in sculptures from Bhārhut,

The noblest purpose of dance has, however, clearly been given as the adoration of the Lord, as it is considered higher than all other offerings, like flowers, oblations and the rest; *pushpanaivedyadānebhyo nrittadānam viśishyate*. The offering of dance to the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music assures the merit of a sacrifice performed, *yajñasya phalam aśnute*. It not only fulfils all desires, but assures liberation (*moksha*) for the devotee, *mokshopāyam cha vindati*. It particularly pleases Vishnu,

Dance as Vyañjanā or Suggestion Superior to Abhidhā Utterance

Of four dancers in the Amarāvati sculpture, the attitude of the central figure suggests the

danseuse commencing dance, just after scattering a handful of flowers, *pushpāñjali*, from the stance *vaiśākha*. The movement of the hands in *patāka* (flag-like *hasta*) are brought inwards, shoulders, elbows and wrists on a level. The *sthāna* which is more like the *maṇḍala* than the *vaiśākha* is excellently suited for graceful feminine dance. The dancer in front of her is in the *ālīḍha sthāna*, the *sthāna* which suggests both a warrior in action and a wrestler (*malla*). The suggestion of *malla*, by pun on the word, which means the Malla tribe as well as a wrestler is noteworthy, as the scene is in Kuśināra, the seat of the Mallas.

Formless Śiva Assumes Form to Enjoy Dance

Undoubtedly Śiva the formless is usually shown in his *liṅga* form. Even where the *mukha-liṅga* is shown, the face is only part of the symbolic representation of Śiva as the *liṅga*, since even where there is a *chaturmukha*, and the concept is multi-lateral, the emphasis is still on the formless post-like *sthānu* form of Śiva-liṅga. Śiva assumes different forms, like Sadāśiva, as he delights in his own cosmic dance, and without the form, he cannot dance. The appeal of dance is so great that he cannot escape it. A great exponent of dance wonders if there is any to whom the great art of dance would not appeal, as it is only for the love of it, as learned men aptly put it, that Śiva chooses to assume a form to enjoy his own cosmic dance:..... *bhātmanopi sadāśivādyākṛitibhedayoge yatkaṭukam kāraṇam āhur aptā nṛitam na tat kasya bhavet sukhāya* (*Nṛitaratnāvalī* I. 4).

Other Important Deities also Delight in Dance

It is not Śiva alone, but all the three principal deities, the trinity, that takes a delight in dance. The wonderful sweet ocular appeal of dance is so inviting that Śiva, Kṛishṇa and Brahmā, practise dance with their respective consorts:*svapreyasibhis samam gopālopi pitāmahopi cha girām devyā yad abhyasyati tasyaitasya samastalokanayanānandāmṛitasandino nṛittasyādbhutasam-pado madhurimā*.... (*Nṛitaratnāvalī* I. 5).

Śiva's *Gauritāṇḍava* is very well known. Not only is Devī a spectator of Śiva's dance as Śivakāmasundarī, but also dances along with him. Sarasvatī is not only the goddess of learning, but also of music and dance, and her dance figures abound. She is almost the feminine counterpart of Viṇādhara Śiva dancing, as Sarasvatī sometimes dances with the *viṇā* in

her hand, though not necessarily in all such representations of her dance. A beautiful lintel from the Śiva temple at Wāraṅgal shows dancing Śiva in the centre, flanked by Brahmā and Viṣṇu, also dancing. Viṣṇu dances in different ways, and particularly as Kṛishṇa in his *rāsa maṇḍalī* and *hallīsalāsyā*, he lays great stress as a cowherd boy, Gopāladāraka, on the folk element in dance. The group dances like *rāsa*, are therefore raised to almost classical heights by the little boy who multiplied himself to dance with the Gopīs in the *rāsa maṇḍala*, as portrayed in the verse: *aṅganām aṅganām antarā mādhave mādhave mādhave chāntareṇāṅganā ittham ākalpīte maṇḍale madhyagas sañjagau veṇunā devakīnandanah* (*Kṛishṇakarṇāmṛita* 2. 35).

The great interest of Lakshmī in music and dance is clear in her appreciation of the *aṅga-hāras* of Viṣṇu as he created the very art of dance through his *lalita* movements, during the deluge, when he proceeded to destroy Madhu and Kaiṭabha. The story goes that Lakshmī was so attracted by this that she straightaway queried Viṣṇu specially about these graceful movements: *parikraman mayā toye dṛiṣṭas salalītaḥ probho atīva ramaṇīyāṅgam kim tat prabrūhi me prabho nṛitam utpāditam hyetan mayā padmanibhekshaṇe aṅga-hārais sakaraṇais samyuktam saparikramaiḥ* (*Viṣṇudharmottara* 34, 15-16). As a great exponent of music it is her privilege to sing to the accompaniment of the musical orchestra during the *Pradosha tāṇḍava* of Śiva: *ramā bhagavatī gānaprayogānvitā*, though sometimes an adept in music, like Vijayā, the companion of Pārvatī, would also swell the musical choir.

Appreciation of Dance

In fact dance is so magnificent that the eyes that do not witness it are like lilies that are not caressed by moonbeams, Kadambas, peacocks or Chakoras not hailed by laden clouds, and swarms of bees that refrain from honey: *kalkā-rair anavāptachandrakiraṇāśleshair alabdhāmbudaiḥ...alikulair aprāptapushpāsavaiḥ sāmīyālāpa-daśām amūni dadhate netrāṇi yeshām puras śaśvan-nāvatarantyudārasushamā nṛitaprayogakramaḥ* (*Nṛitaratnāvalī* I.6).

Conversely, the festival of witnessing dance is the fruit of possessing large lovely eyes in a charming moonlike face, as part of an attractive form, that is the very glory of birth as a prince, the fruit of innumerable good deeds on earth: *samsāre bhavati pradhānam amitair labhyam śubhair mānushair janmāsmīn kṣhitipālātā nirava-*

dhis śrīr atra kāntam vapuḥ etasmin mukham indusundaram iha snigdha viśālāyatā dṛishṭis tām saphalīkaroti ramaṇilāsyāvalokotsavaḥ (Nṛittaratnāvalī I.9).

As the princes had the most liberal education of every type, including the fine arts, a thorough grounding in dance and music was indispensable for them. Born of a great family of charm and elegance and possessing form and stature, knowledge and ability, they could almost appreciate perfection of form and symmetry in the graceful movements of the dancer, by appreciating excellent performance, which provided a feast for their eyes, that richly deserved it.

Dance brings together in movement all the essential charm in the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and sky, i.e. reflection in gems, waves and ripples in water, flames in fire, movement of wind, and the play of lightning: *kshitau ratnachchhāyāphalanam udake vichilalitam śikhinyarchihpreṅkhā sahajagatīvaichitryam anile tad-ītkrīḍā vyomnītyakritasubhagāḥ pañchasu parāḥ pravishṭo bhuteshu prabhavati hi nṛittasya mahimā (Nṛittaratnāvalī I.10).*

There is a characteristic of movement in dance bringing together a charm of the elements, that explains the glory of Śiva himself, both as *aṣṭamūrti* and as composed of the five elements. Śiva is a great dancer. He assumes forms only for enjoying his dance, and these are forms appropriate for dance; and the five elements in their perceptive movements only suggest the rhythmic movements in dance, thus, eulogising Śiva's *pāñchabhautika* form, the five elements composing his dance form. The dance of Śiva in *ākāśa* is his sky form. In Chidambaram, where there is a *rahasya*, shown by a curtain covering empty space, *ākāśa* is his ethereal form. The perceptible form is presented in the glorious image of the Lord of dance, Naṭarāja. There is, thus, a commentary as it were on the verse that induces him to assume a form for enjoying his own dance. In the Liṅgodbhava form Śiva, himself as a flaming pillar, baffles even Viṣṇu and Brahmā, and he has to reveal himself in a form emerging from it. Incredible even to these two great gods of the trinity, Śiva is so close to the Pramaṭhagaṇas, the ugly imps that dance along with him, that the love of dance alone can explain how Śiva welcomes every one connected with the exposition of the art, himself choosing even to abandon his normal formless

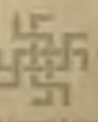
form to assume a tangible shape for the glory of dance.

Knowledge of Dance a Blessing

There is an inducement for the learning and exposition of dance, as the belief is that dance well done brings the danseuse *dharma* or merit from the gods as their blessings, wealth from delighted princes as an appreciation, heartfelt applause from women for excellence in display of the art, and fame through the praise of different merits in action from concourses of the most learned in the field. There is thus unprecedented glory provided by excelling in this great branch of fine art: *dharmam devā dharanīpatayo dadyur artham prasannās tanvīvargas sprihayati kalāpraudhibhaṅgividheyāḥ vidvadgosh-ṭhyo bahuvidhaguṇaparakriyāvarṇanābhīḥ kīrtim tasmai dadhati vividham yena nṛittam prayuktam (Nṛittaratnāvalī I. 11).*

It provides not only the satisfaction of gaining glory by the knowledge of exposition of a great art, but dance so promotes the zeal of princes in every way, that it prevents their slackening enthusiasm for *śrīṅgāra*, arrests the attenuation of their heroic spirit (*dhairya*), helps them never to tire in a sustained interest (*vinoda*), overcomes lassitude in increasing ego or confidence, stops indifference towards munificence and prevents disinclination towards personal fame and glory. It helps to build up great qualities in princes which are required for providing a rich life of utility and cultural advantages to the people of their realm, entrusted to their care: *nityam nātyakalāvīlāsakutukapṛāgbhāraviśrāṇanapraudhāhaṅkṛitīnā taraṅgitamudo dhanyā dharitṛīśvarāḥ śrīṅgāre viratim na yānti laghutām dhairye vinode klamam māne mlānim anādaram vitarāṇe kīrtāvanāsthām api (Nṛittaratnāvalī I. 8).*

It is this attitude of princes that has inspired them enthusiastically to provide such festivals for the eyes to feast on, as mentioned in the inscription of Khāravēla, where there is special mention of the pastime provided by the emperor for his people. As a daily factor in life, this was made part of ritual in temples and during festivals, so that every little urchin in the village, watching the movements of the danseuse in the evening worship, as a matter of course, learnt the nuances of the art, slowly but unconsciously and thoroughly with ease, to be able to distinguish and appreciate every little movement, thus providing a vast appreciative audience in every nook and corner of



the country, which was the best assurance for the fostering of a great art. Only where exists an appreciative audience that knows and evaluates it can an art flourish, but never otherwise, howsoever propped up by an extravagant rain of pelf.

Dance as a pastime was always considered a great accomplishment. When the consort of Naravāhanadatta danced, the prince himself played the *vīṇā*: *tasyām priyāyām nṛityantyām svayam vīṇām avādayat* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 6, 8, 171). Dance, as a pastime, is so superior, that the prince who is fortunate to have an accomplished youthful dancer as his consort, cannot indulge in any other inferior pastime.

The Qualities of a Dancer

The qualities of the dancer enumerated are interesting. A *mugdhā* on the threshold of youth, that has not yet completely established itself but is full of its perfume, soft and delicate in all her limbs, with a musical voice deep and appealing, excelling in the delicate aspect of dance (*lāsya*), rich in the gesticulation of mood and flavour, charming of form, suggested by the very hue of the vermilion lip, resembling the *bimba* fruit, is a beautiful dancer, who could be worthy only of a prince comparable to Indra himself: *udyadyauvanasaurabhām mṛidutanum prasnigdhaḡitasvanām nānābhāvarasādhya-lāsyaniṣuṇām bimbādhārām nartakīm labdhvā rājapurandarasya satatam nirviṣṭasarvendriyām... ivāsvādo vinodāntaraiḡ* (*Nṛitaratnāvalī* I. 7).

These great distinctive attributes of a dancer are greatly stressed in literature. Vararuchi has a very interesting passage in his one-act drama, where he describes the excellences of a dancer and her accomplishments. Priyaṅgu-senā, the famous young dancer, combines in herself initially the basic requisites, like beauty of form, the bloom of the dawn of youth, alluring hue, great bodily sheen and several such others. Apart from this, are her accomplishments in the art itself, her mastery over four-fold *abhinaya*, the thirty-two varieties of hand movements, eighteen modes of glances, six stances, three-fold movements, eight flavours, tripartite musical rhythm and other such dance factors, which are, as the poet describes, beautified by their association with such a talented danseuse: *yasyās tāvat prathamam rūpaśrinavayauvanadyutikāntiyādīnām guṇānām sam-pat chaturvidhābhinayasiddhīḡ, dvātrīṣadvidho hastaprachārah, aṣṭādaśavidham nirikṣhaṇam, shaṭ sthānāni, gaṭitrayam, aṣṭau rasāḡ, trayo gīta-*

vāditrādīlayā, ityevamādīni nṛittāṅgāni tvadāśra-yeṇālaṅkṛitāni (*Ubhayābhisārikā*, p. 142).

A splendid body, possessing beautiful form and graceful gait, as essential requisite in a dancer is detailed by Kālidāsa in a verse describing the perfection of a danseuse. Eyes long, face beautiful like the autumnal moon, arms drooping, shoulders narrow, breasts high and close, the sides appearing kneaded, the waist just the measure of the palm, hips huge, feet with bent toes, the body of the danseuse is fashioned just as a dancer could wish it to be: *dīrghākṣham śaradīndukānti vadanam bāhū natāvamsayos samkṣiptam nibiḡonnatastanam uraḡ pārśve pramṛiṣṭe iva madhyaḡ pāṇimīto nitambi jaghanam pādāvarālāṅgulī chhando nartayitur yathai-va manasas śliṣṭam tathāsyā vapuḡ* (*Mālavikāgnimitra* 2. 3).

Appreciation of the dancer in action is wonderfully given by Kālidāsa. The text of the theme has been clearly explained through the disposition of the limbs, which have almost been made to speak the text. The tread of the foot has closely followed *laya*. There has been a complete identification of the dancer with the *rasa*: *aṅgair antarnihitavachanais sūchitas samyag arthaḡ pādanyāso layam anugatas tanmayatvam raseshu* (*Mālavikāgnimitra* 2. 8).

It is not only in action that the damsel looks so charming, but even when she rests for a while, her disposition arrests. A pause after a dance, and a graceful pose in which the dancer stands, with one hand on the hip and another dangling on one side, and with the feet toying with a flower petal on the ground, is even more charming than the dance movement itself: *vāmam sandhistimitavalayam nyasya hastam nitambe kṛitvā śyāmāviṭapasadṛiṣam srastamuktam dvitīyam pādāṅguṣṭhālulitakusume kuṭṭīme pātītākṣham nṛi-tyādasyās sthitam atitarām kāntam rījvāyatārdham* (*Mālavikāgnimitra* 2. 6).

The beautiful Bhutesar Yakshī, listening to the parrot, is almost an exact representation of this pose. It is difficult to fail to see that the sculptor who created this carving had not this verse in his mind as he chiselled it.

The great quality of dance is that the graceful movements of a dancer, even normally, when away from the stage intended for dance, still make the heart of everyone around leap almost in a dance at the very sight; it is not the regular dance alone that is necessary to arouse

this enthusiasm, as unconsciously, a dancer has graceful movements always about her all the time: *pratīnartayase nityam janānayanamanāmsi cheshtitair lalitaiḥ kim nartanena subhage paryāptā chārulīva* (*Ubhayābhisārikā*, 29).

In the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, the qualities of a danseuse are enumerated. The *nartakī* or the danseuse should be not only very beautiful, in the bloom of youth with high and rounded breasts, but also full of self-confidence, charming, agreeable, dextrous in handling the critical passages, skilful in steps and rhythms and at home on the stage, expert in posing hands and body, graceful in gesture, with wide open eyes, able to follow song and instruments and rhythm, bedecked with noble jewels, with a charming lotus face, neither very stout nor very thin, nor very tall nor very short.

The converse of this constitutes the demerits or the disqualifications. She should not be too stout or exceedingly thin, neither too tall nor too short, or hunchbacked, lacking abundant hair, having thick lips or pendant breasts, or pale eyes and lacking a good voice. It is essential that the danseuse should also be a good musician as, though accompanied by the orchestra, the dancer herself sings, melodiously though softly, thus heightening the effect.

The dancer should not only be handsome but very winsome in speech, erudite, eloquent, distinguished in learning, particularly of the *śāstras* pertaining to art and science, sweet of voice, versed in music, both vocal and instrumental, with not only a capacity for dancing but with abundant self-confidence and full of ready wit. Above all, she is to be of good birth and breeding.

Essentials of Dance

The factors that make the dancer effective are given in what are known as her *antaḥ prāṇa* (inner life) and *bahih prāṇa* (outer life). Composure, symmetry, versatility, appropriate glances, ease in performance, intelligence in rendering, confidence in one's own skill, unfaltering speech and excellence in music, compose the ten factors of inner life. Outer life is entirely based on the accompaniments, including the orchestra and the singer, *gāyaka*. As music itself starts with the drum, the drum leads the other instruments in the musical accompaniments. The drum, sweet sounding cymbals, the flute, the chorus, the drone, the lute, the bells, and probably the most impor-

tant of all, the singer or *gāyaka* of established repute, constitute the component parts of outer life. Of these, the bells are so important in heightening the effect of rhythm in dance, particularly in pure dance, *nr̥itta*, that a special injunction as to the number of *kiṅkīṇīs* (tiny bells) on each foot is mentioned, a hundred or two hundred for each foot, or a hundred for the right foot or two hundred for the left.

The importance of music as an accompaniment to dance is clearly given by Bharata who denounces the ignoramus in *tāla* who can neither be a vocalist nor an instrumentalist. The components of *tāla* are *yati*, *pāṇi*, *laya*, etc. *Laya* is composed of *druta*, *madhya* and *vilambita*—fast, middling and slow. *Yati* is also threefold—*sama*, *śaridvaha* and *gopuchchha*—even, straight flow and modulating. *Pāṇi* is also of three varieties, *samapāṇi*, *avapāṇi* and *uparipāṇi*. In appreciation of music, Śrī Harsha, the royal poet has paid a tribute to instrumental music following all these. If the form of instrumental music (*vīṇā*) is brought out in the ten-fold *vyāñjana dhātu*, the *laya* is marked by its three varieties—*druta*, *madhya* and *lambita*. The three *yatis*, *gopuchchha* and the rest, have been carefully manipulated. The best of instrumental music has been meticulously followed and demonstrated: *vyaktir vyāñjanadhātunā daśavidhenāpyatra labdhāmunā vispaśhto drutamadhyalambitaparichchhinnas tridhāyam layaḥ gopuchchhapramukhāḥ krameṇa yatayas tisroḥi sampādītās tatvaughānugatās cha vādyavidhayas samyak trayo darśitāḥ* (*Nāgānanda* I. 15).

The *nāṭya krama* or the sequence in dance is given in a verse, the song to be sustained in the throat, meaning rendered by the hands, the moods (*bhāva*) delivered by the glances, and the rhythm (*tāla*) marked by the feet: *kañthenāmbayet gītam hastenārtham pradarśayet chakshurbhyām darśayed bhāvam pādābhyām tālam ācharet* (*Abhinayadarpaṇa*). Where the hand moves, the glances follow; where the glances go, the mind follows; where the mind goes, the mood follows; where the mood goes, there is flavour (*rasa*).

Nr̥itta follows the *tāla* beat and is an eloquent expression of pure rhythmic movement, while *abhinaya*, which is the principal element in *nr̥itya*, is full of suggestion and expresses *rasa* and *bhāva*, flavour and mood. Suggestion or *vyāñjana* is its very life. *Nāṭya* is dance as used in a drama *nāṭaka*, to follow the original plot itself. Each one of these three has the soft and

vigorous aspects, rendering them *lāsyā* or *tāṇḍava*.

Abhinaya, being the most important element in *nṛitya*, is very elaborately treated by describing the vocabulary composing its own language through the *hastas* and the movement of limbs. Though *abhinaya* is divided into four modes, *āṅgika*, *vāchika*, *āhārya* and *sātvika*, bodily, vocal, ornamental and of the mental state, whether tranquil, passionately agitated or deeply stupefied, the main exposition is through the bodily movements, where the gestures of limbs clearly determine the exposition of thought conveyed. So then, there are classifications commencing with *aṅga abhinaya*, the major limbs like head, hands, armpit, sides, waist, and feet, and probably also including the neck. The movement of the minor parts of the body constitute *pratyaṅga abhinaya*, where shoulder blades, arms, back, stomach, thighs, and calves, and probably also the wrist, knees and elbows included, constitute an additional element of expression through movements. The *upāṅga abhinaya* is rendered by the movement of definitely lesser parts composing the body, but which nevertheless clearly conveys more the thought or sense intended, as all of them are located on the face. These are the eyes, eyelids, pupils, cheeks, nose, jaw, lips, teeth, tongue, chin and the face itself. To these may also be added the heel, ankles, fingers, toes and palm as *upāṅgas*.

Like the enumeration of the nine movements of the head, eight glances of the eye, six movements of the brows, four movements of the neck, there are classifications of the hands, *hastabhedas*, which are of two kinds, *asamyuta* or *samyuta*, single or combined, twenty-eight of the former and twenty-four of the latter. There are also the *chārīs* and *sthānakas*, *maṇḍalas* and *gatis*. The *chārīs* are harmonised and coordinated action of the foot, calf, thigh and waist. Action with a single leg is *chārī* and that with both the legs is *karaṇa*. The *karaṇa* in the nature of a *kramaṇa* is different from the *karaṇa* that constitutes the coordinated movement of hands and feet. Dance is impossible without *chārī*. It can be either performed on the ground (*bhaumya*) or above the ground (*ākāśika*). The main stances or *sthānakas* are six. There are ten *ākāśika maṇḍalas* and a similar number of *bhaumya maṇḍalas*, which are made up of a number of *chārīs*, as three *karaṇas* make a *khaṇḍa*, and four *khaṇḍas* a *maṇḍala*. The *karaṇa* constitutes the coordination of the movement

of the hands and feet. There are one hundred and eight of them enumerated. Two *karaṇas* form a *mātrika*, or a single unit of action. Three *karaṇas* make a *kalāpaka* and four a *bhaṇḍaka*. A combination of five *karaṇas* make a *saṅghātaka*. The combination of six, seven, eight or nine *karaṇas* produce the *aṅgaḥāras* which are thirty-two in number. The *karaṇas* beginning with *talapushpapuṭa* up to *gaṅgāvataraṇa* constitute a rich variety of poses, never to be taken in static form by themselves, but, as a fleeting flash in a perennial sequence of dance movements, composing varieties of *aṅgaḥāras*, *kalāpakas*, *bhaṇḍakas* and so forth. The meaning of each *hasta* is as varied as to compose a regular play on words in dance itself, as in literature. It is very interesting that Ratnākara, a great adept in dance, refers to *hastas* appropriately, suggesting even the minutest detail of action in feminine sport. For instance, in the gathering of flowers, *pushpāvacchaya*, even casually to gather flowers, the lovely-browed damsel dances forth her hand for a long while, here and there, with the fingers in *saṁdamśa* attitude. The commentator who is also from Kashmir and equally encyclopaedic in his knowledge, explains *saṁdamśa hasta* according to Bharata and shows how it is a movement for gathering flowers: *nirlakṣham kusumaparigrahāya sūbhrūṣ saṁdamśam suchiram-ababhramat karāgram* (*Haravijaya* 17. 76). *Saṁdamśa* also connotes teaching. It has a host of connotations, among which a small bud, imparting of knowledge *jñānamudrā*, and gentle dance (*lāsyā naṭana*) are very important, apart from the attitude of worship *archanā*, where the pointing finger moves away frequently from the thumb. The hand, originating as it does from the goddess of speech, Sarasvatī, is very significant in all these connotations. Śiva Naṭarāja is very often shown with his hand in *saṁdamśa* to suggest his teaching the art, particularly *lāsyā*, as an aid to supreme knowledge, or by the attainment of *jñāna*. The commentator describes the correct position of *saṁdamśa*, which is erroneously described in the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, but correctly given in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, from which he quotes: *tarjanyaṅguṣṭhasamyogas tvarālasya yadā bhavet abhugnataalamadhyas cha sa saṁdamśa iti smṛitaḥ*.

Ratnākara is so full of knowledge of Bharata that he never misses an opportunity of giving an exposition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, even by a play on words wherever it is possible. As a number of *karaṇas* make up *aṅgaḥāras*, he brings in these, as a simile, in describing pearls making up



necklaces. The necklaces of beautiful damsels composed of bright, solid, spheroid, pleasing pearls of quality, that could stand the test of excellence, well settled on their breasts, almost appeared to shoot up beautiful effulgence on their limbs, composed as they were like lovely *aṅgahāras* made up of several *karaṇas*: *vispash-tadradhimagunābhirāmarūpais satsthānasthitibhir anūnalakshaṇādhyaiḥ rāmāṇām karaṇagaṇair ivāṅ-gahārā nājahrus śriyam atha mauktikair na hārāḥ* (*Haraviṇaya* 17. 28). The commentator has the most important interesting elucidation here. The *sthānas* are *vaishṇava* and others. It is known from Bharata that the *sthānas* are six, namely, *vaishṇava*, *saṃpāda*, *vaiśākha*, *maṇḍala*, *pratyālīḍha*, *ālīḍha*. The necklaces of the damsels composed of pearls were surely very alluring like the *aṅgahāras* composed of several *karaṇas*. *Chārīs* and *nṛttahastas*, hands in gesture, combine to make up *karaṇas* like *talapushpapuṭa* and others, which, in their turn, compose *aṅgahāras* like *sthirahasta* and the rest, which indeed produce the beauty of dance like the pearls here composing the beauty of the *hāras* or the necklace: *sthānāni cha vaishṇavādi | yaduktam cha 'vaishṇa-vam saṃpādādam cha vaiśākham maṇḍalam tathā pratyālīḍham athālīḍham sthānānyetāni shaṭ nṛṇām' iti || aṅganāṇām hārā mauktikais śobhām svīchakrur eva | yathā karaṇagaṇair aṅgahārāḥ | chārīnṛttahas-tādiyogajanyais talapushpādibhiḥ karaṇair nirvar-*

tyamānās sthirahastādayoṅgahārā yathāharanti śob-hām tathā mauktikair hārā ityarihaḥ.

Dance as an ocular feast is so prominent, that a poet goes to the extent of describing nature itself as struggling to express itself, in terms of the joy of dance. Spring is the season for it when it is most effective, when vernal glory in sylvan surroundings making even the birds and trees in movement, attuned to dance movements. *Vasanta* or spring is the time for dance, when birds warble instrumental, to accompany the vocal music of cuckoos, creepers instructed by tutorial breezes, gesticulate, as the feminine folk of the sylvan harem, to which respond trees in the joy of their blossoms, expressed by the tips of the finger-like leafy sprouts, as princely spring approaches, and winter, pale white, like a garland of pearls, disappears: *ātodyam pakshisaṃghās tarurasamudī-tāḥ kokilā gānti gītam vātāchāryopadeśād abhinayati latā kānanāntaḥpurastrī tām vrikshās sādhayanti svakusumahṛishitāḥ pallavāgrāṅgulibhis śrīmān prāp-to vasantas tvaritam apagato hāragauras tushārāḥ* (*Padmaṇṛbhṛitaka* 3).

Sculptor's Interpretation of Dance

Dance scenes occur frequently in sculpture and shed great light on those portions of the text of Bharata which are obscure in spite of



FIG. 3. Dancer in the court of Suddhodhana, hands in *patāka* and *daṇḍahasta* as at Sittannavāsal, Śrīvijaya, 8th century A.D., Barabudur, Indonesia.



FIG. 4. Dancer with hand in *daṇḍahasta* and *patāka* as in the case of Nāṭarāja, Pāṇḍya, 9th century A.D. Sittannavāsal.

the continuous living tradition kept up to this day in the Bharata *nāṭya*. The dance figures from the Bhārhut and Amarāvati *stūpa* rails, from Nagod state and the Kṛishṇā valley respectively, from the frieze of the Rāṇinūr caves in Orissa, from the gateway carvings of Sānchī, from Pawāyā in Gwalior state and from other monuments of early and medieval date from all over India, are interesting for a study of dance traditions in India. But probably there are none more useful or interesting than the panels from the Naṭarāja temple at Chidambaram, the Sāraṅgapāṇi temple at Kumbakonam, the Vṛiddhagiriśvara temple at Vṛiddhāchalam, and the Aruṇāchaleśvara temple at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, the first with labels added in Choḷa Grantha characters, clearly explaining the dance *karaṇas*, according to the more intelligible visual modes, the obscure and not-too-well understood textual definitions of Bharata. No one who has seen the exquisite dancing figures from the Pāṇḍya paintings on the pillars of the Sittannavāśal cave and the Choḷa ones from the *pradakṣhiṇavīthī* of the sanctum of the Brihadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr can have any doubt in deciding the golden age of this art in South India. Traditions of South India have travelled abroad and found a richer efflorescence in distant Java, and the exquisite carvings at Barabudur and Pram-

banam, that recall South Indian traditions in dance, are not echoes so faint and indistinct as to be obscure in their connotations. The *hastas*, both *samyuta* and *asamyuta*, and the *karaṇas* known to Bharata are found in the numerous carvings of Java. The *rechitakas*, specially of *kaṇṭha* and *kaṭi*, fleeting momentary sway of the limbs, are clearly caught and suggested with a rare alertness that eloquently proclaims the keen study of the allied arts by the sculptor, as expected in the standard Indian book on art, *Chitrasūtra* in the *Vishṇudharmottara*.

There is a scene from prince Siddhārtha's youth showing a dancer with her hands so disposed that one is in *daṇḍa hasta* and the other bent against the shoulder in *patāka* (Fig. 3), strongly reminding us of the similar dancing figure from the Sittannavāśal cave painting (Fig. 4) and the numerous Naṭarāja bronzes forming so important an integral feature of every Śiva temple in South India. The legs, however, are in the *chatura* pose for the danseuse from Java, and in this, as well as in the hands, the figure, taking only the hands in *daṇḍa* and *patāka* and ignoring the rest of the arms in the dancing Śiva from Ellora, may be compared with the latter. The movement in the figure from Java is more pronounced. Not only in this, but also in other dance scenes, both from



FIG. 5. A pair of dancers in pure joy with hands in alapadma, Choḷa, 11th century A.D. Brihadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

Barabudur and Prambanam, there is a rhythmic movement suggested in the swaying form of the figures delineated.

Not only in pose but also in the attuning of the dance to the notes of the orchestra and the time beat there is clear suggestion of it in its pure *nṛitta* form. A Chola painting from the Bṛihadiśvara temple shows the perfectly attuned movements of the dances exhibiting the mode of pure *nṛitta* to the accompaniment of music. This *laya*, or swinging of bodily movement and musical notes, is vividly brought out in the position of hands and glances, not only of the dancers but of the dwarf Gaṇa drummers

and the celestials keeping time, as Śiva, seated, witnesses the dance. There is not a single false step nor a wavering in the hand attuned to the *laya*. There is pure *nṛitta* pictured in this representation. It is not *abhinaya* for conveying the *bhāva* or the flavour. It is the pure gymnastics of dance in close resonance with the time beat (Fig. 5, 8).

A beautiful sculpture in metal is the concept of Naṭarāja dancing and two Gaṇas on either side, close to the starting point of the *prabhā*, keeping time, one with his hand just lifted from the mouth of the *ūrdhva* drum and the other similarly with the hands brought apart



FIG. 6. Śiva dancing with two Gaṇas flanking him, playing the drum and clapping the hands to keep time, early Chola, 11th century A.D. Melaperumballam, Tanjāvūr Distt, Madras Museum.

after a clap. The leg of the dancing Lord himself, slightly lifted with a jerk, along with the attitude of the Gaṇas, shows how all these three are exactly in consonance with the time beat, *tāla*, and how well the rhythmic form of dance is maintained (Fig. 6).

Antiquity of Nāṭya

Nāṭya is ageless and originates with the desire of man to express himself. But as a great science, *nāṭya* has had considerable antiquity in India. Professor Rhys Davids, who has argued for the age of the text of the *Jātakas*, with the help of the labels from the Bhārhut sculptures, has clearly shown the way to establish how the earliest ocular representations like this are unequivocal indications of date. In the 2nd century B.C. in sculpture from Bhārhut, there are clear representations of *karaṇas* and *aṅgaḥāras*. Famous Apasaras, well known in early literature, are mentioned by name in labels that go with the figures (Fig. 7). On the Sānchī *torana* and in sculpture from Amarāvati there are clear representations of pure *nṛitta* and *nṛitya* with *abhinaya*.

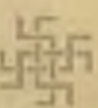
Princes like Udayana and Naravāhanadatta, contemporaries of Buddha, were profound in their knowledge of music and dance. Naravāhanadatta's consort was an adept in dance, while the prince could play the *viṇā* for her.

Mahākshatrapa Rudradāman was learned in grammar, in music and other arts and sciences. The word *Gāndharva* should not be taken as music alone. He was an adept not only in music but also in dance. Music, dance, and art are by their very nature complementary. Apart from early Vedic references to music and dance of which are several, when we come to the historical period, Pāṇini himself refers to Śilālin and Kṛishāśva as ancient authors of *Naṭasūtras*. Bharata is referred to with the utmost regard and respect as a *muni* or a sage by very early authors like Kālidāsa. It is unnecessary to go into the several arguments to prove a very early date, almost 5th-4th centuries B.C. for Bharata by Monomohan Ghosh.

Nāṭya has been considered in India to be one of the most ancient forms of language for worship, where both *mantra* and *tantra* are used. *Mantra* is utterance and *tantra* symbolic gesture. It has thus found great favour with religion and ritual all over the country. The greatest celestials have been associated with it. In fact, a thanks-offering to them is given in the *raṅgapūjā*, where Śiva, Devī, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Sarasvatī, Kārttikeya, Indra, Dikpālas, Mātṛikās, are all mentioned. The Mātṛikās are not merely Mātṛikās, but dancing Mātṛikās. They are called Nāṭyamātarāḥ. There are very early



FIG. 7. Dance with renowned celestial apasaras, Alambushā, Mīśrakēśī, Padmāvatī and Subhadrā dancing to the accompaniment of orchestral music in Sudharmā devasabhā, Świga, 2nd century B.C. Bhārhut, Indian Museum, Calcutta.



representations of the dancing Mātrikās. In the early drama, *Mṛichchhakatika*, the worship of the Mātrikās by Chārudatta is of special note. The gait of Vasantasenā's charming brother, as remarked by the Vidūshaka, almost reminds us of the *aṅgahāras* of Viṣṇu as he moved along in the *pralaya* ocean to destroy Madhu, which accounts for the origin of the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*. In the *Chaturbhāṇī*, four very early one-act plays, a completely evolved *Nāṭyaśāstra* is pre-supposed. The tradition of classical and folk dances and their rich variety,

the *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* forms, their use in *nāṭya*, and the tradition of Śiva, as the *adhiṣṭhāna devatā* of *nāṭya* and *nāṭaka*, goes far back into antiquity. The reference to Śiva as the essence of *nāṭya* itself is of frequent occurrence in the *Purāṇas*. In fact, the *Viṣṇudharmottara* visualises the personification of *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself as Śiva dancing. It is the antiquity of the art itself, and the great fervour and reverence for it, that account for this identification of the great art with the greatest celestial artist as its exponent.

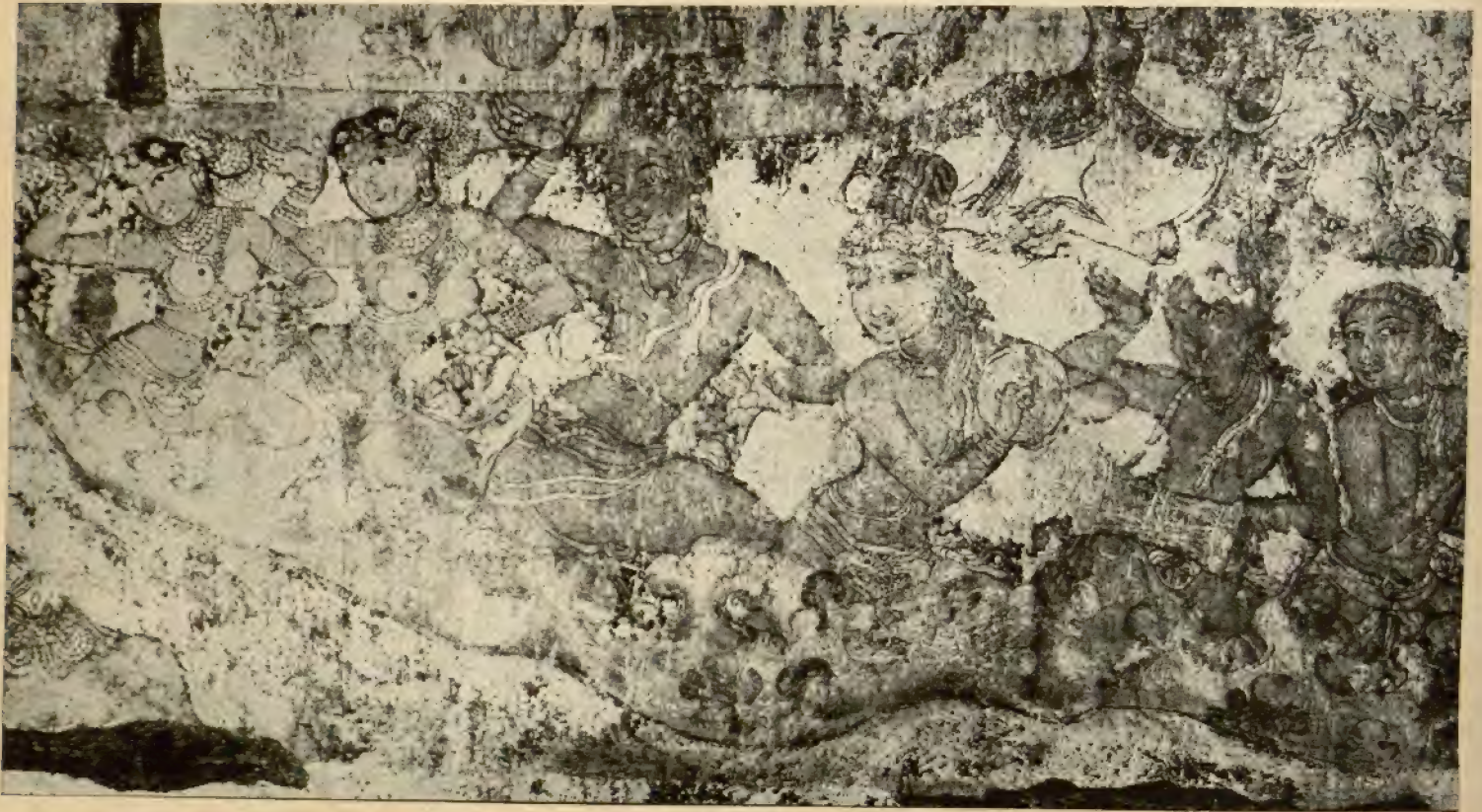


FIG. 8. Celestial dancers and musicians in pure nṛtta in musical consonance, Chola, 11th century A. D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tanjavūr.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SIVA'S DANCE

Dance of Bliss

Coomaraswamy has brought together a number of passages from Tamil literature lucidly to explain the significance of Śiva's *ānandatāṇḍava*. From *Chidambara Mummaṇi kovai*, he quotes 'O my Lord! thy hand holding the sacred drum has made and ordered the heavens and earth and other worlds and innumerable souls. Thy lifted hand protects the multifarious animate and inanimate extended universe. Thy sacred foot, planted on the ground, gives an abode to the tired soul, struggling in the toils of *karma*. It is thy lifted foot that grants eternal bliss to those that approach thee. These five actions are indeed thy handicraft' (Indian Collections in the Boston Museum, p. 90). Quoting again from *Uṇmai Viḷakkam*, he exclaims this *pañchakṛitya*, the five actions of the Lord as 'driving away *māyā*, burning *karma*, crushing *āṇava*, by grace (*aruḷ*) raising the soul and sinking it in the ocean of bliss—these are the works of the feet of our Father' (Indian Collections in the Boston Museum, p. 90). Coomaraswamy compares 'the feet of the Lord' with the idea of 'the footstool of the most high' in Biblical phraseology.

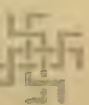
The well known verse embodied in *Sabhāpati stotra*, which has the same import, reads: May that Śiva protect us, who, summoning all the worlds, drowned in the misery of cycles of births and deaths, by the sound of his drum and, most merciful, offers them protection, assuring the suppliants removal of all fear, and raising up his leg slightly bent, points to it with a hand, as the path of liberation, and as an assurance holds forth fire, as he dances gaily in the dance hall: *lokān āhūya sarvān ḍamarukaninadair ghorasamsāramagnān datvābhīshṭam dayāluḥ praṇatabhayaharam kuñchitam pādapadmam uddhṛityedam vimukter ayanam iti karād darśayan pratyayārtham bibhṛad vahnim sabhāyām kalayati naṭanam yas sa pāyāchchhivo naḥ* (*Sabhāpati stotra* 2, in *Stotrasamuchchaya*).

In *Mummaṇi Kovai* the idea of calling all the denizens of heaven and earth and innumerable souls from the several worlds is an idea identical with that in the first line of this verse. Even where the drum is intended to reveal the

grammatical aphorisms to Pāṇini, it is grammatical knowledge just for Pāṇini, but for the rest, including Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, who represent the quintessence of wisdom, it is the path of bliss that is vouchsafed for them through the sound of the drum. The juvenile saints, Sanaka, Sanandana and others, only symbolise the yearning devotees on earth, longing for liberation. Even the grammarian in his verse *nrittāvasāne naṭarājaṇo nanāda dhakkām navapañchavāram uddhartukāmas sanakādisiddhān etad vimarśe śivasūtrajālam* 'at the end of the dance, Naṭarāja the Lord sounded the drum nine times and five, desirous of calling up all evolved souls like Sanaka and others for liberation: this mystery of the grammatical rules I hereby expound' gives precedence to the precept on the path of liberation. The grammatical rules are incidental and intended for a great sage who concentrated attention on systematising grammar, after understanding it at the hands of the greatest teacher of the universe, Śiva himself. Even here words correctly understood and used properly to convey the right sense, assure heavenly bliss as Patañjali would put it: *ekasābdas samyak jñātaḥ śāstrāṇṛitaḥ suprayuktas sarge loke kāmādhuk bhavati* (*Mahābhāṣya* 1, 2.) But for Sanaka, Sanandana, etc., it was a still higher path of thought and realisation, the way of bliss and liberation. It was thus two birds at one stroke for Śiva, a secular and spiritual achievement.

It is stated in the verse that he shows the flame of fire as an assurance. This is, as it were, more clearly understood from the lines quoted in *Uṇmai Viḷakkam*, where Śiva is described as 'driving away *māyā*, burning *karma*, crushing *āṇava*, by grace (*aruḷ*) raising the soul and sinking it in the ocean of bliss'. The assurance here is by holding out fire as the antidote for *karma* that could be burnt out. He crushes ignorance in the form of the dwarf under his foot. The grace is in the hand of protection, and through the hand pointing to the raised foot, the ocean of bliss is assured.

Actually, the *pañchakṛitya*, or the five activities of Naṭarāja, are *śṛiṣṭi*, creation or evolu-



tion, *sthiti*, preservation or continued maintenance, *samhāra*, destruction or involution, *tirobhāva*, veiling, illusion or incarnation, and *anugraha*, release or salvation of the Supreme Immanent Power. In Śrīdhara's *Devapaṭṭana prāsaṭi*, Śiva's *pañchakṛitya* is specially mentioned. He is the one support for the long garland of worlds, composing the universe from Manomaṇi to Bhūmi, the highest Truth and the wonderful effective cause of the *pañchakṛitya* activity (*Epigraph. Ind.* 2, 439).

What is Śiva's dance ? asks Coomaraswamy. To give the question an answer, quite distinct from the consideration of the aesthetical value of the image, for the appreciation of the beauty of which an aesthetic approach is enough, the true place of Śiva's dance as understood by the seers is explained with almost an esoteric fervour. Thāyumānavar is quoted: 'O thou that dancest the dance of bliss in the hall of consciousness'. The earlier text of *Uṇmai Vilakkam* is pressed in for elucidating this line: 'the silent saints, destroying the three-fold bond (*pāśam*), are established where their selfhood is annihilated: there they behold the sacred Dance and are filled with bliss'.

Sabhā is *Chitsabhā*, the hall of sentience. *Ānandatāṇḍava* is the joyous dance of the soul within oneself. Puṇḍarikapuram or Chidambaram is *puṇḍarikapuram* or the lotus of the heart of the devotee himself. Here the Lord dances. In fact, all the poets and all the hymnographers have beseeched Śiva as Naṭarāja to dance in their hearts. Śankara prays to Śiva to dance in his heart: 'O please dance on jewelled shoes in my heart and hurt not your feet on the rocky slopes of the Himālayas: *machchetomaṇipādukāviharaṇam śambho sadāṅgikuru, Śivānandalaharī*, 64). In another of his hymns he refers to Śiva's swirling tawny locks of hair, flashing like lightning, as he dances in the lotus of the devotee's heart: *mahāpunyapāke maṇapūṇḍarīke sadā samvasantam chidānandarūpam* (*Sāmbasadāśivabhujāṅgaprayāta stotra* 6). Appayya Dīkshita, almost to warm up the nearly frozen form of Śiva, requests him to dance in his heart, ever burning in the heat of worldly travail: *chitte nirvedatapte yadi bhavati na te nityavāso madiye* (*Śrīmadappayadīkshitendravidyayaḥ*, p. 116).

In the *stotra*, *Tatvāryāstuti*, there is a query whether 'there is anywhere in any god the mark of the Supreme Being or the nature of Bliss, except in the Lord of Chidambara (the ether

of sentience) who delights in *ānandatāṇḍava*', in the verses 'I shall not completely drown myself in illusion nor abandon myself in sorrow: but I shall completely identify myself with the farthest boundary of joy at the last extremity of bliss in the shining abode of Tillavana which is in my own immaculate self' and 'the fearful illusion came on me in the *Chitsabhā*, but the form of Śiva wearing the half moon and in the company of Umā, so pleasant to me, gave me the best of knowledge through the light of the cool-rayed moon, who removes illusion and enlightens'. Here is a clear picture of the significance of Śiva's dance not so much in an outside golden hall as in the lotus hall in one's own heart.

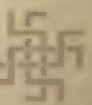
There is no doubt that the highest significance of dance is in the dance of bliss in *chidākāśa* in *hṛītpuṇḍarīka*, Chidambara, Puṇḍarikapura. In the *Sūtasamhitā*, a part of *Skānda Purāṇa*, the importance of Vyāghrapura, where Śiva as the Supreme Dancer assures the highest bliss through *jñāna*, is narrated. He is described there as the dancing consort of Ambikā, the Lord of the assembly of the highest philosophers, beyond the vision of even the greatest of sages, that graciously made himself visible in his benign attitude: *tataḥ prasanno bhagavān maheśvaro munīśvarāṇām api dṛiṣṭi-gocharaḥ pranṛityamāno* *bhavadambikāpatiḥ samastavedāntasabhāpatīḥ śivaḥ* (*Sūtasamhitā* 8, 9, 47).

A mere glimpse of Śiva at this great spot is believed to assure deliverance: *tasmād bhavan-topi puroktavartmanā śivasya nṛittam śivayā nirikshitam dṛiṣṭvā maheśasya harasya sūlināḥ prasādamātrena vimuktibhāgināḥ* (*Sūtasamhitā* 3, 9, 30).

It is the great grace of Śiva that this bliss-conferring sight of his dance is vouchsafed for everyone, which Pārvatī alone, his consort, as Śivakāmasundarī, could witness. As Coomaraswamy has elsewhere pointed out, Devī in her great mercy witnesses what is impossible of being seen by others, so that, like the mother that partakes of the medicine which the baby cannot directly taste, though through the mother could benefit by it, she gazes and passes on the benefit of the vision to the children, her devotees: *kailāse sandhyayos śambhuḥ karotyānandanartanam tachchhivā kevalam paśyatyanyas tatra na paśyati* (*Sūtasamhitā* 3, 9, 6).

Dance of Omnipotence

Śiva's dance of omnipotence, is in his *ālīḍha* aspect, a warrior's dance after the destruction



of the Tripuras. In fact, the entire celestial world was behind Śiva in every form, but in an impossible situation. The earth, one of his *asṭamūrtis*, was the chariot that bore him; the sun and moon, also part of his eightfold form, and that composed his eyes, were the wheels under the car. Viṣṇu himself, one of his forms as the Trinity, was the arrow aimed at the Tripuras, in conjunction with fire, again one of his *asṭamūrtis*. Brahmā, another form of himself as the Trinity, was his charioteer. His own breath, the *Vedas*, were the horses yoked to the car, his own ornament the snake Vāsuki was the bowstring, his abode itself, the mountain Meru, was the bow held in his hand, as Śiva stood, with all the celestials ready individually to help him. Yet by a mere look at the Tripuras he burnt the brazen castles and annihilated them. This has impressed poets so much that each has fancied Tripurāntaka in his own way. Maṅkha pictures the universe transposed in the Tripura array, the snake at the top as jewel, the earth below it as chariot and sun and moon lower down as wheels, all indeed topsy turvey: *uparyahindro giriśasya bhūṣhaṇam babhau rathātmā tadadho vasundharā athāsta tat-pādadaśendusūryayor aho tadā viśvaviparyayo bhavat* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* 21, 19).

Normally, the snake holds up the earth and on top, in the sky, are the sun and the moon. But here it is reversed; the snake on the top as the jewel of Śiva, the earth underneath him as the chariot and the sun and moon as wheels still lower down.

The greatest triumph of Śiva is as Tripurāntaka, *tripuravijayo giyate kinnaribhiḥ* (*Meghadūta*). It is a military triumph; and the dance here after the annihilation of the Tripuras is one of victory; and it is the expression of his might which is beyond that of all the celestials, *sarvā-tiriktasāra*, proclaiming his omnipotence, the symbol of which is the dance pose *ālīḍha* (Fig. 1), signifying a great warrior: *atishṭhad ālīḍhaviśeśaśobhinā vupuḥprakarsheṇa viḍambiteśvaraḥ* (*Raghuvamśa* 3, 52).

Dance of Immanence

Śiva's dance as *asṭamūrti* is symbolic of his presence everywhere, *sarvavyāpi* and this is his dance of immanence. It not only is a dance of the eight forms of Śiva *asṭamūrti* but also of the Dikpālas, Varuṇa representing *ap*, water, Vāyu, Agni. This also brings in the Grahas like Sūrya and Chandra. Mārtāṇḍa Bhairava, a form of Śiva dancing, is only an expression



FIG. 1. Ālīḍhanṛtta of Śiva in the warrior pose, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D. Virūpākṣa temple, Paṭṭadakal.

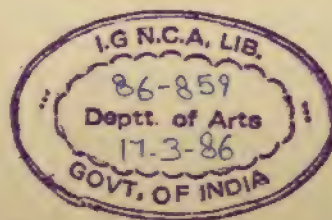
of Sūrya dancing as a form of Rudra. One of the finest examples of this form is from Koṇārak.

Dance of Time and Eternity

The dance of time and eternity is that of Kālāntaka. Śiva embodies eternity as he overcomes Death. Jñānasambanda graphically illustrates it in his hymn, where he has it that Śiva reveals himself as the Absolute, and blesses as he kicks Death who reels back: *ūrramikka kālānrannai yolkavutaitharuḷi torramīru mākininrāi* (*Tevārattirupatikam* 1, 51, 5). Nīlakaṇṭha Dikshita claims for the Pārvatī half of Śiva the credit for this great triumph, as it is the left leg that laid Death prostrate: *vāmāṅghrimātrakalite janani tvadiye ko vā prasaktir iha kālajaye purāreḥ* (*Ānandasāgarastava*, 56). He is shown in this form dancing on the prostrate body of Death himself, Yama. One of the finest sculptures representing Kālāntaka is from the Bṛhadiśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr, and a similar one is from Koḍumbālūr, near Pudukkottai.

Dance of Omniscience

Naṭarāja dancing with the *vinā*, as represented in several northern forms, signifies his supreme knowledge, as *sarvajña*. It is the dance



of omniscience. As Dakṣiṇāmūrti, as Naṭarāja, and as Viṇādhara he is respectively the Lord of knowledge, of dance and of music; and in this composite concept, there is the essence of all knowledge brought together to suggest omniscience.

In the *Sūtasamhitā*, Naṭarāja's immense interest in every form of knowledge, particularly literature in its highest form, is indicated by the narration of the legend of Śaunaka, who was blessed by Naṭarāja at Chidambaram, to be a great exponent of the first of the *Vedas*, the *Rigveda* according to the version of Sākalya: *vedānām ādibhūtasya ṛigvedasya mamājñayā bhava nīrvāhakaḥ tatra sākalyasya viśeshataḥ* (*Sūtasamhitā* 3, 9, 24).

Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* has held out the promise that a word properly understood and correctly used earns for one a permanent place in heaven. It is the same idea that is repeated by Rāmabhadra Dikshita, when he describes how Pāṇini, to whom the drum of

mute, eloquent master of the most profound ṛishis. The ṛishis are the seers of the *Vedas*: *ṛishayaḥ mantradrashṭāraḥ*. The ṛishis just comprehended the *Vedas*. Veda is Brahmā, and the creator Brahmā has to create according to earlier precedents which are to be sought from the *Vedas*, *dhātā yathāpūrvam akalpayat*. The *Vedas* are beyond him who could not reach the crest of the Lord as Liṅgodbhava. They are the breath emanating from him, *yasya niśvasitam vedāḥ*.

There are other forms of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, beating the drum, dancing Śiva himself patting the drum, all of which only suggest this bringing together of every variety of knowledge, philosophic thought and aesthetic connoisseurship of the highest order. That is why the personified form of *nāṭya* is described as Naṭarāja himself—*nṛitaśāstram maheśvaraḥ* (*Vishnudharmottara* 73, 47).

Very often, Śiva is shown dancing with his hand in *chinmudrā*, or the *samdamśa* hand



FIG. 2. Lintel representing Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, all the three as *nāṭyāchāryas*, Kākatīya, 12th century A.D. Wāraṅgal, National Museum.

Naṭarāja revealed the fourteen *sūtras*, could create the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and codify correct lingual usage, a ladder to the celestial abode: *itiśvarānugrahaṭo nibadhnān sūtrāṇi sa vyākṛita śabdajālam sushṭhuprayogam kathayanti yasya svarlokaśopānaparampareti* (*Patañjalīcharita* 1. 51).

The idea of Śiva as the poet of the *Vedas* probes into the form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the

according to Bharata, which is as much as to say that he is the teacher of *Gāndhārvavidyā*, music and dance, as represented in his dance form. Sometimes he is shown dancing with Brahmā and Viṣṇu, all of them as *Nāṭyāchāryas* (Fig. 2). The dancing form of Sarasvatī, Devī and Lakṣmī is to personify the female counterparts of the great masters of dance who are in no way behind their consorts in the exposition



FIG. 3. *Gaṇeśa dancing, Hoysala, 12th century A.D., Hoysalesvara temple, Halebidu.*

of dance. This is why Jāya, the Kākatīya commander-in-chief, in his *Nṛitaratnāvalī*, refers to the dance of the trinity with their consorts. He dances also with the Mātṛikās and the Bhūtagaṇas, Gaṇeśa, Bhairava and Kālī, as dance is the best expression of the highest philosophic truth that Śiva has to convey to the world. By his silent discourse in static form under the banyan tree, or by his dynamic movement and gesticulation in his variety of dance, he equally conveys his message. The dance of Gaṇeśa, next to that of Śiva, is the most favoured for description in literature, and portrayal in sculpture and painting. The most beautiful dancing Gaṇeśas in sculpture are the multi-armed one with the trunk swung forward and aloft at the entrance to the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebidu (Fig. 3) and Gaṇeśa dancing with the Mātṛikās (Fig. 4) from Abaneri of the Gurjara Pratihāra period from

Rājasthān. The tradition of Gaṇeśa dancing on his vehicle, the mouse, like his father on the bull, is a special characteristic in the realm of the Pālas.

Probably, it is Śiva's temples all over that have been enlivened by the theme of rows of Bhūtagaṇas playing musical instruments, or dancing in a variety of *karāṇas*. There is no motif that has engaged the sculptor with greater joy and enthusiasm than the dance of the Gaṇas, that evokes a smile by the very grotesque disposition of their short, impish limbs.

Similarly, the dance of Bhairava and Kālī, and particularly Bhṛṅgīrīṭi, the one nude and the other two skeleton-like, is equally amazing, and literature abounds in descriptions of them that cannot but draw a smile from the reader.

Dance Symbol of Creation and Sustenance

Dance as a symbol of creation is represented in that of Ardhanārīśvara, and that of existence



FIG. 4. *Gaṇeśa and Mātṛikā Brahmāṇī dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D. Abaneri.*

and sustenance in Viṣṇu himself dancing, or Devī, who is no other than Viṣṇu himself, dancing and in the form of dancing Mohinī. One of the finest representations of Ardhanārīśvara dancing is from Bhubanesvar. Viṣṇu himself, along with Brahmā, dances with Śiva in a beautiful Kākatīya carving on a lintel. The dance of Viṣṇu, with a *viṇā* in his hand, is



FIG. 5. Śiva dancing with Mohinī, painting from Maṭṭāncheri Palace, late Kerala, 17th century A.D.

another beautiful medieval concept from the Chālukyan territory. Viṣṇu as Mohinī, the sweet alluring lady, that misled the Asuras, is shown dancing with Śiva in an important painting from the Maṭṭāncheri Palace in Kerala (Fig. 5). Mohinī holds her own with Śiva in her dance steps. It is a very vigorous form of dance and probably Śiva finds it difficult to keep pace with Mohinī. There is another painting of dancing Mohinī, also from Maṭṭāncheri Palace (Fig. 6), which shows Śiva and Pārvatī seated as *prekshakas*, or spectators, witnessing her dance, like that of Kālī or Bhṛīṅgiriṭī. The dance of Ardhanārīśvara is significantly the dance of creation because the hermaphrodite form symbolises the coming together of the parents of the universe for creation. Mohinī, which is only a guise of Viṣṇu or Viṣṇu himself dancing, symbolises the dance of existence. It is Viṣṇu who distributed ambrosia among the Devas to assure them eternal existence. So it is this dance of existence and sustenance that goes by the name of *Mohiniāṭṭam* in Kerala.

The dance of Ardhanārīśvara, which is rather infrequent in its occurrence, though a theme of great charm, is not only to suggest the line of demarcation between *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, but also at the same time, their close union and interdependence, as also the greater philosophic thought behind it. The famous *Halāyudha stotra*, by one of the greatest devotee poets of Bengal from Navagrāma, which is not only greatly appreciated, but has found a permanent place on the southern wall of the *maṇḍapa* of Amareśvara temple at Māndhātā on the banks of the Narmadā in the Nimar district in Central India, describes Śiva Ardhanārīśvara as the union of Prakṛiti and Puruṣa in the sense that *jñāna* (knowledge) and *jñeya* (the known) are together. There can be no *jñāna* (knowledge) without contact with *jñeya*; and *jñeya* cannot just exist apart from *jñāna* that comprehends it: so one is a complement of the other. If Kālidāsa has said that *vāk* and *artha*, utterance and its sense, in union, are Śiva and Pārvatī as Ardhanārīśvara, this goes one step further and makes *pramāṇa* and



FIG. 6. *Śiva and Pārvatī, watching Mohini dance, late Chera, 18th century A.D. Maṭṭāñcheri Palace, Cochin, Kerala.*

prameya in śāstraic terminology as the very essence of the concept of Ardhanārīśvara: *jñānam na syāt kvachid api kila jñeyasambandhaśūnyam jñeyam sattām api na labhate jñānabāhyam kadāchit ityanyonyagrathitam ubhayor vyāpikam yatsvarūpam tatto prāhuḥ prakṛitipuruṣasyārdhanārīśvaratvam* (Epigraph. Ind. 15, p. 180).

Māyā

Coomaraswamy does not agree with Arunachalam (*Jour. Cey. Br. Roy. Asia. Soc.* 1917) that the *tiruvāṣi* or the circle of flames around the dancing figure in South Indian metal images represents the *Prāṇava* or *Omkāra*, generalised symbol of all possible sounds. Coomaraswamy's argument for this is that texts are already clear about the drum representing sound, which would make this interpretation superfluous. He quotes *Tiru Arul Payan* for the proof that this aureole symbolises the dance of Nature (material and individual energy): 'The dance of Nature (*prakṛiti*) proceeds on one side, the dance of Wisdom (*jñāna*) on the other'. He further explains that 'the *Tiruvāṣi* represents the dance of Nature (material and individual energy) reflecting that of the informing Power' (Indian Collections in the Boston Museum, p. 91).

But it has to be borne in mind that as early as the 8th-9th century, Śaṅkara, who was well aware of metal images representing Naṭarāja, calls this circle *Māyā* or illusion, leading us to the Lord, directing us to *prāṇava*, the happy path of bliss; by removing illusion, Śiva carries the devotees to the path of liberation: *om iti tava nirdeśtrī māyāsmākam mṛḍopakartrī bho* (*Suvarṇamālā stotra* 12). The circular *tiruvāṣi*, resembling the circular symbol *Om*, may not be the sound *Om* as held by Sir P. Ramanathan, but it certainly is interpreted as *Māyā*.

The removal of *māyā* has engaged the attention of several poets and sculptors. One of the most interesting features in the early representation of Naṭarāja by the Vākāṭaka and early Western Chāḷukya sculptors is the removal of the veil itself. This curtain is gracefully held in one of the hands of dancing Śiva. Splendid examples come from Elephanta (Fig. 7) and Paṭṭaḍakal.

In this context, we cannot but recall Udayana's description of Śiva as the creator, sportfully active as he creates, and an observer, quiet thereafter, whose potency is described as unique auxiliary power (by the Naiyāyikas),



FIG. 7. Naṭarāja removing the veil of Māyā, Vākāṭaka, 5th century A.D. Elephanta.

unfathomable illusion (by the Mādhyamikas), as Nature, the very root of things (by the Sāṅkhyas), and as misconception (by the Vedāntins): *ityeśhā sahakārīśaktirasamā māyā durunnīto mūlatvāt prakṛitih prabodhabhayato'vidyeti yasyoditā devosau virataprapañcharachanākallolakolāhalasākshātsākshitayā manasyabhīratim badhnātu śānto mama* (*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 1. 20).

The actual act of Śiva creating and destroying this illusion is contained in another verse that says—Śiva creates wonderfully, and as he creates, destroys by his illusion, when he recreates, as in magical phantasy and so he sports: *kāram kāram alaukikādbhutamayam māyāvaśāt samharan hāram hāram apīndrajālam iva yaḥ kurvan jagat kṛḍati tam devam niravagrahasphuradabhidhyānānubhāvam bhavam viśvāsaikabhuvam śivam prati naman bhūyasam anteshvapi* (*Nyāyakusumāñjali*, 2. 4).

The concept of illusion in the case of Śiva as he creates and destroys is so prominent that he is called *Chitramāyā* in a Pallava inscription. Śiva, free from illusion, but manifold in illusion (*Chitramāyā*), devoid of qualities but yet possessing them, self-existent and without any superior, who has no lord and is the Lord of all,

is a laudatory verse inscribed on the Gaṇeśa ratha at Mahābalipuram: *amāyas chitramāyo-sāvaguno guṇabhājanah svastho niruttaro jīyād anīśah paramēśvaraḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 10, 8).

Śaṅkara, who lived in the eighth century, describes in terms of the palaeography of the letter *tha* that *māyā* is a circle, suggestive of void: *thākṛitiriva tava māyā* (Suvarṇamālā stotra 27).

The *māyā* of Śiva is different from the other well known illusion, like *māyā* of Śambara, *Śambari māyā*, the *māyā* of Viṣṇu, *Vaiṣṇavi māyā*. This is an illusion created as a sport of Śiva, and its removal, an assured fact, is also a further extension of that very sport. In the Charala plates of Vīra Rājendra, there is a verse describing this aspect of Śiva's *māyā*: Śiva, by his sport, the creator, protector, destroyer, and also the one on the hill, who holds by his clear immaculate form of *yoga* an ever spreading illusion that pleases and enslaves the world, creating both true knowledge and ignorance, being merciful to all, high and low, sentient and non-sentient, joyous and sorrowful, removes all sins and affords protection from the great danger of falling from the precipice: *māyām āyāminīm yo vahati jagad idam rañjayantīm jayanti jñānājñānaprasūtim sphuṭaruchivapushā yogabhājāgabhājā satvāsatsvānukampī sthītamuditamahātāpasūnām paśūnām śambhuḥ sambhugnapāpavyatikṛiti bhavatas sa prapātāt prapātāt* (Epigraph. Ind. 25, p. 254).

Like the balloon assuming form when filled with air, and losing it by loss thereof, the illusion of creation and destruction of the entire universe is wrought, as Daṇḍi feels Śiva, as the Overlord of the universe, is rightly so characterised; the universe comes into being only when he fills it with his immanence: without him as sentience there is no cause or creator for the creation. Earth, water, sky, air and light owe their existence to the fact that they are parts of him. He is thus *ashṭamūrti*, as the dance of Śiva is the dance of evolution and involution, creating the illusion of appearance and disappearance of the worlds, composing the universe.

Ashṭamūrti

There is the *ashṭamūrti* aspect specially described by Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The Ganges that also dances on his *jaṭās* is his liquid form, *jalamayamūrti*. Kālidāsa himself proclaims Gaṅgā as the aquatic form of Śambhu: *śambhor*

ambumayī mūrtis saiva devī surāpagā (Kumārasambhava 10. 26). Even the Ganges dances on the stage of his *jaṭās*, that swirl like flashes of lightning, as Śiva himself dances on the lotus of the heart: *taṭitpuñjachañchajjaṭājūṭavāṭīnaṭaj-jāhnukanyātaṭinyā sametam* (Sāmbasadāśivabhujāṅgaṇaprayāta stotra 6). The eight-fold form of Śiva as the creator and the protector of the universe is often repeated in literature, the famous instance being Kālidāsa's *nāndīśloka* of the *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. Even in distant Cambodia, the *ashṭamūrti* form of Śiva is specially invoked and epigraphical literature in India itself abounds in description of the eight forms of Śiva. Even here Śiva has nothing for himself, as everything goes for the good of the universe, a fact proven by his assumption of the eight forms: *viditam vo yathā svārthā na me kāśchit pravṛittayaḥ nanu mūrtibhir ashṭābhir itthambhūtosmi sūchitaḥ* (Kumārasambhava 6. 26).

These are not only the forms of Śiva but are of the utmost utility for the very existence of the universe, nay, its sustenance itself. Further they are his visual forms, seen and experienced by one and all: *pratyakshābhiḥ prapannas tanubhir avatu vas tābhir ashṭābhir īśah* (Abhijñānaśākuntalam 1. 1). As Kālidāsa would put it, these are water, sacrificer, sun and moon, sky, earth and air. And yet, though Śiva is the sustainer of the entire universe, he is completely free from all ego about it: *ashṭābhir yasya kṛitsnam jagadapi tanubhir bibhrato nābhimānaḥ* (Mālavikāgnimitra I. 1).

Life itself is a dance, and all things on earth are danced by Śiva. That is why in *Tatvār-yāstuti*, the devotee has a pertinent query. He exclaims: O Naṭeśa universal dancer! are you yourself dancing or dancing me, dressed in the five elements? Abhinavagupta in his *Abhinavabhāratī* calls Śiva's form as the enlivening aquatic elixir for the sprouting of the seed, *samsāranāṭya*, world-dance, expressed in Devī herself: *samsāranāṭyajananaadhātribījalatājushīm jalamūrtim śivam patyus sarasam paryupāsmahe* (Nāṭyaśāstra, 2. 1).

We may here compare a very interesting sculpture from Nepal showing Umāmaheśvara, with *kalaśa* in the hand of Devī, a *kalaśa* with ambrosia for vivifying (Fig. 8). Mañkha describes Devī, in this case Sarasvatī, holding a jar of ambrosia to sprinkle and soften (sweeten), the *Vyākaraṇa-mahābhāshya* issuing from the mouth of Śeṣha: *vāgdevīkarakumbhanīryadamṛitoddṛikṭena sikte mahābhāshyam kāvyarasena tat tava chiram vaktredya*



FIG. 8. Śiva and Pārvatī holding amṛita kalāśa for enlivening and rejuvenating by sprinkling ambrosia, 11th century A.D. Kumbheśvara temple tank, Patna, Nepal.

viśrāmyati (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 25. 44). The idea of Devī holding the jar of the immortal fluid is so ingrained in thought that it is found often repeated, as in the word picture of Śiva with Umā on his lap, as Umāmaheśvara, holding the jar of ambrosia, *chinmudra*, book and rosary as he embraces Devī: *vāmorūpari samsthītām girisūtām anyonyam ālingitām śyāmām utpaladhārīṇīm śaśinibhām chālokayantam śivam āśliṣṭhena karaṇa pustakam atho kumbham sudhāpūritam mudrām jñānamayīm dadhānam aparair muktākshamālam bhaje* (Dakṣiṇāmūrtinavaratnamālāstotra, 8).

The flying garments and *jaṭas* of Śiva in dance are a clear indication of his airy aspect. In fact, as the *Abhinavabhāratī* puts it, Śiva eternally depicts the world in his sports in his form as air: *svavilāsair idam viśvam yo darśayati santatam samīramūrtim tam vande girirājasutāpriyam* (Nāṭyaśāstra, 4. 1).

Śiva's sky form is described as the stage for the dance itself by Abhinavagupta: *sam-sāranāṭyanirmāṇe yāvakaśavidhānataḥ purvarangāyate vyomamūrtim tām śāṅkarim numaḥ* (Nāṭyaśāstra 5. 1). Here the name *Chidambara* and the dance of Śiva in the hall of the sky has to be recalled.

In a verse attributed to Dhīranāga, there is a description of Śiva's heaped up locks (*jaṭasamhati*), looking like the upward flame of ripened penance, the charming anthill for the surging Gaṅgā's snake-like wavy curve, like sunset, with the crescent moon, delicate like the lotus filament, and of red hue like the rising sun: *jvālevordhvavisarpiṇī pariṇatasyāntas tapastejaso gaṅgātuṅgatarāṅgasarpavasatir valmīkalakshmīr iva sandhyevārdramṛiṇālakomalatanor indos sahasṭhāyini pāyādvat taruṇāruṇāmsukapiśā sambhor jaṭasamhatiḥ* (Subhāshitaratnakośa 4. 26). Here, as it were, there is an epitome of all the elements composing the form of Śiva in the *uttamāṅga* or the principal limb i.e. head, which is symbol of the entire body composed of almost all the *aṣṭamūrti*, the eight forms. It is fire, flame-like, like the anthill, it is the earth, the Ganges wave is water, the snake symbolises the air it inhales, the crescent moon the moon itself, and the red hue of the rising sun, the sun.

In the Bherāghaṭ inscription, Śiva's *aṣṭamūrtis*, eight forms, are described as the all-pervasive sky, the sun that lights up, the moon that gladdens, water that causes diversity of savours, earth that has odour, the sacrificer, fire which is hot, and air which is felt and not seen: *bhūtam sad vibhu yad vibhāti bhuvanam yad vibhramad yajjagannetrānandakaram dharāśrayasādyanyatvahetus cha yat yad gandhoddhuradhāma yachcha yajate' śītam yad ekāntatas sasparsam yad arūpam ebhir avatād yushmān śarīrais śivāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 2, p. 10).

The same composite form of Śiva is again described in another way, this time locating in Śiva's physical form these various elements. According to the inscription of Jājalladeva, Śiva, the eightformed one, has the sun, moon and fire as his eye, his breath is air, his body is the earth, and on his head is water, his ear holds the sky, and he is himself *paramānandātmārūpa* or of the nature of bliss: *suryāchandrmasau samam hutabhujā yasya trayī chakshushām uchchhvāśeshu marut tanau vasumatī yasyottamāṅge payaḥ vyoma śrotracharam chirāya paramānandātmārūpas svayam ... sosṭamūrtis śivam* (Corp. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 522).

The almost amazing nature of *ashtamūrti* in Śiva is that one of the forms, the earth, is a personified Devī, who is the consort of Viṣṇu as Bhūdevī. Viṣṇu himself in hermaphrodite form, has his consort to the left, like Ardha-nārīśvara Śiva. Śiva himself in his Harihara form, is one half Viṣṇu. So one half of Viṣṇu is one eighth of Śiva. This is a peculiar calculation of the *mūrtis*, composing Śiva and Viṣṇu. Having this in mind, the poet of the copper-plate grant of Virūpāksha describes earth as both the wife of Hari and body of Śiva as *ashtamūrti*: *śaśvad viśvambharām vande viśvam harikuṭumbinīm mūrtim meghenduchūḍasya saptaśā-garamekhalām* (Epigraph. Ind. 3, p. 227).

After all, Śiva assumes all these forms to uphold the universe. Though he is the only one with the significant appellation *Īśvara* who is beyond all, he assumes the eight forms only for upholding and maintaining the universe, as its creator, protector and destroyer: *yah kartā bhuvanatrāyasya tanubhir viśvam prithi-vyādibhiḥ yasyedam dhriyate ya īśvara iti khyāto bhavannāparaḥ yas samjñātrāyam eka eva bhajati traiguṇyabhedāśrito bhrāhmopendramahēsvareti jagatām īśāya tasmai namaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 19, p. 279).

With these eight forms, Śiva dances. The dance of the whirlwind, the dance of the flame, the quake of the earth, the dance of the waves, the dance of light itself, i.e., of the sun and moon, are all aspects of his dance. Śrī Harsha gives a vivid description of Śiva's evening dance with the earth as one of the *ashtamūrtis* dancing, a red rain of blood serving as twilight and dust as ashes. This is a picture of fancy, the earth trembling under the feet of the armies of a king, likened to dance, the dust appearing like ashes, with which Śiva's body is smeared. The earth, one of the eight forms of Śiva, begins to dance with the rain of blood on the battlefield, simulating the hue of twilight. This dance is almost as if very thoughtfully arranged for Śiva's customary dance in the eve: *yad bhartuḥ kurute' bhisheṇanamayam śakro bhuvas sa dhruvam daigdhāhair iva bhasmabhir maghavatā vṛiṣṭair dhṛitoddhūlanā śambhor mā bata sandhivelanatanam bhāji vratam drāg iti kṣhoṇi nṛityati mūrtir ashtavapusho' sṛigvṛiṣṭisandhyādhiyā* (Naishadhīyacharita 20. 92).

The dance of *ashtamūrtis*, like the dance of the *dikpālas* and the *trimūrtis*, though interesting in pointedly illustrating the dance among all the celestials, as the most beloved art of Śiva, who is a symbol of all of them and the symbol

of the great art itself, is nevertheless all the more interesting, as the eight forms of Śiva are not apart from Śiva himself, who is himself the embodiment of dance. It is in this sense that Śrī Harsha fancies the dance of earth, as one of the eight forms of Śiva dancing.

The Import of the Decoration of Śiva's Jaṭās (Āhārya)

Actually, even the ornaments of Śiva seem to have their own lesson to impart. The import of these objects is very telling. The moon, that is just a crescent on the lofty crest of Śiva, seems to announce the highest quality of self sacrifice allowing himself to be eaten up by the celestials, which assures the fullest growth and spread of fame, that is white, and reflected in the full moon and the pleasant moonlight, that creates an illusion of white all over the world, making it difficult for even Śiva to recognise his Himālaya, Brahmā his lotus abode, Viṣṇu his milky ocean *paryāyapīṭasya surair himāmśoḥ kalākshayas ślāghyataro hi vṛiddheḥ* (Raghuvamśa 5. 16).

The skull ornament, dilapidated, shedding its teeth, as Śiva tosses his head in dance, laughing as it seems, almost appears like the remaining teeth of the sun seeking Śiva's help to save them: *nishpeshabhītīśaraṇāgatapūshavaktraśeṣhāpareva hasatā vidhutottamāṅgam yena vyalokyata purāṇakapālamaulibandhachyutā daśana-paṅktir adhaḥ patantī* (Haravijaya I. 41).

But why should the gaping skull laugh at all ! This imagined laughter is also significant. The baby saint, Jñānasambanda, describes, in one of his hymns, Śiva dancing with the Ganges stream, the moon, the garland of skulls laughing at the evanescence of the world, all on his locks: *natiyatanayale nakutalaimālai nāṇ-matichaṭaimichai yaṇintu* (Tevārattirupatikam 41-5). The skulls laugh at those of the world that consider themselves eternal, unable to realise how evanescent life is, almost recalling the verse of the *Mahābhārata* describing living beings entering the abode of death every day, while the remaining long for eternity: *ahanyahani bhutāni praviśanti yamālayam śeṣhās sthāvaram ichchhanti kim āścharyam ataḥ param* (Mahābhārata 3, 313, 116).

In describing the *ashtamūrti* of Śiva, the sameness of Gaṅgā with the aquatic form of Śiva, is clearly given in the expression *sarūpām*. Śiva, the highest beyond whom nothing exists, is yet so tolerant as to allow a separate existence

for Gaṅgā, that would almost create a disruption in the house by the quarrel of the co-wives Gaṅgā and Gaurī: *viyad vāyur vahnir jalam avanir indur dinakaras chidādhāras cheti tribhuvanam idam yanmayam abhūt sa vah śreyo deyāt paramasuranāthas suranadīm sarūpām bibhrāṇas śirasi giri-jākshepavishayaḥ* (*Hist. Inscr. of Gujarat, Chaulukya*, p. 104 and *Epigraph. Ind.* 2, p. 440).

Though wearing skulls and bones, Śiva who is yet the purest, *śavamunḍābharaṇopi pāvanaḥ*, as Upamanyu puts it, gives the highest place for Gaṅgā as the purifying stream. Though the destroyer, Śiva is most kind hearted.

The moon is part of Śiva himself as *ashta-mūrti*. Though the destroyer of Kāma and Kalā, Śiva eternally rejuvenates them both equally through the moon. The moon form of *ashta-mūrti* therefore assumes a special importance. Through the maddening effect of the moonbeams on lovers, he keeps alive Kāma, and through the same *chandrakalās* or digits, he creates a time factor assuring the eternal march of time and thus has Kalā rejuvenated: *lokārthamashtāvapi mūrtayomūr atiprakṛiṣṭā tu ya esha murtiḥ kāmam cha kalam cha hi sarvakālam yatonugrihṇātyavirodham iśaḥ* (*Prithvīrājaviṇaya mahākāvya* 6. 73).

The pulling aside of the veil or *Māyā* is likened by Samarapuṅgava Dikshita to the pulling of a curtain and allowing a flood of light for the dance on the stage itself. It is most interesting that witnessing the dance form of Śiva at Kālahastī, he hails the Lord. Having first conveyed the *Nāndī* benediction in the form of deeds of merit performed, and exhibited skill in expressing the prologue, heavily charged with every mode of devotion, suddenly pulling aside the veil of darkness and flooding it with the light of knowledge, when will you, O Kālahastīśa, dance in my heart, asks the poet. It is here a picture of the dancer on the stage, with the preamble of the drama and the start of action, all described vividly: *satkarmācharaṇātmikām prathamatas sampādyā nāndīm tataḥ prādurbhāvya samastabhaktigarimaḥprastāvanā-kausalam drāg utsārya tamaḥpaṭīm atha vṛite dīpena vidyātmanā chitte me naṭanam vidhāsyasi kadā śrīkālahastīśvara* (*Yātrāprabandha* 6. 126).

Creation and Destruction only Transformation and Rejuvenation

The description of the creation of the cosmos is couched in the Vedic text: *sokāmayata bahusyām prajāyeyeti*, the Lord desired, may I be

transformed into many—and that is the origin of the complexity of the world. More comprehensive, and almost as a commentary on this text, is the idea given in the verse from the Harsha stone inscription: Śiva is the incomparable architect of world's creation, by whose will, all that was not, is produced or emerges into shape, disappears or merges into void, the universe with its speeding moon, sun and stars, expanse of worlds, mountains, rivers, islands and oceans, with the celestials, demons, serpents, Pramathas (dwarf gaṇas), sages, yakshas and mortals: *chamchachchandrārkatāram bhuvananaganadīdvīpasindhuprapañcham viśvam devāsuraḥpramathamunivarair yakshamartyais sanātham yasyechchhāsaktibhāvād asad api sakalam jāyate liyate cha so'vyād vo harshadevo bhuvanavira- chanāsūtradharo'prameyaḥ* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 2, p. 120).

Śiva is the auspicious one but he is also Rudra. If he destroys as Rudra, he creates and sustains through his Śiva or auspicious part. The moon on Śiva's head is, as it were, the remover of all fear of death and danger: *śriyam diśatu yas sambhor mūrdhni śaitāmsāvi kalā kālavyālakṛitāne-kajagadvyāpattihārīṇi* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 333, p. 341). Another *prāsasti* describes Śiva's crescent moon as the immaculate sprout of the wishfulfilling creeper *kalpavallī* yielding the desires of all devotees, sustained by the waters of the Ganges in the bed (*ālavāla*), formed by the coil of the snake on his *jaṭās*: *gaṅgāmbusamsiktabhujāṅgamālavāle kalendoramalāṅkurābhā yanmūrdhni namrehitakalpavallyā bhātīva bhūtyai sa tavāstu śambhuḥ* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 1, p. 233).

Though Rudra is the destroyer, he actually does not destroy but only transforms and this transformation is only for rejuvenation and for the peace and prosperity of the world. The lustre of Rudra destroys the darkness of illusion of the cycle of births and deaths and assures peace for the world as he transforms the entire universe at the end of the night of the deluge: *bhavatu bhavati timirabhiduram tejo raudram praśāntaye jagataḥ parivarttate samagram kalpāntaniśāvasāne yat* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 32, p. 288).

He is not only the architect of the universe, he is himself the author of the theory of this mode of construction, and his is not an effort limited to a short time schedule to bring into existence something that has not been there. He is eternally active, as there is no creation, no destruction, but only transformation and transmutation, for which his omniscience, omnipotence and immanence and overpowering

will make him the supreme Īsvara, the only one who could be addressed as the All Powerful. The dance of Śiva is a symbol of this eternal dance. His eternal creation is an eternal cycle of creation, protection, destruction and deliverance.

Symbol of Life

The dancing form of Śiva has always been described as with arms spread out like a forest of trees. The *jaṭās*, spread and whirling in his dance, scattering flowers, and the waves of Gaṅgā rollicking on the moving *jaṭās*, with Gaurī herself, in close proximity, standing in charming *tribhaṅga* stance, inclining towards her lord, is conceived in a beautiful inscription of the 12th century from the Canarese districts as the most luscious growth of verdure, and that celestial, the wishfulfilling tree and creeper. In other words, this is a picture of Śiva as a symbol of life, existence, *sattā*, joy, *ānanda* and *chit*, vivacity or animation: *śrīmadgaṅgātaraṅga-chchalitajalakanaśreṇipushpālīsobhādhamam chañchajjaṭāpallavam amritakarodyatphalam bāhuśakhārāmam gaurilatāliṅgitam amaranutam śambhukalpadruvadam ramangigatthiyim vāñchitaphalachayam samtototsāhadimdam* (Epigraph. Ind. 5, p. 245).

Śiva is also a gardener, and plants, protects and weeds out; only, while normally in life the gardener and the seed are different, Śiva is himself the seed, the sprout with plant, the over-grown weed, and the gardener, who determines all. An inscription from Khajuraho is very clear on this: *viśṭāpavikaṭavaṭānām ajāyamānāya bijabhūtāya rudrāya namaḥ pālana-vilayakṛite nihkriyāyāpi* (Epigraph. Ind. I, p. 140).

Śiva Auspicious

It is amazing in how many different ways the illusion of Śiva's constant creation and destruction is described, but in every case, with proper stress on his auspicious nature, and his trying to keep the whole world auspicious. He is himself the symbol of this auspiciousness. His *jaṭābhāra*, which contains the skull, symbol of death, the crescent moon, symbol of growth and eternity, Gaṅgā, symbol of the elixir of sustenance and life, the snake, symbol of transmigration from one body to the other by the eternal soul which casts off the worn body like a used garment or the peeled off slough of the viper, is all as it were a symbolic presentation of what Śiva himself means, and more than that, his dynamic action as he dances. An inscription of Jājalladeva describes Śiva's *jaṭābhāra* as a *maṅgala kalaśa*, with the locks of

hair as a cluster of lotuses, with the flame of the third eye on the forehead as the light on a lampstand, with the stream of water of the heavenly river, all making up an auspicious pitcher: *mūrdhanyastajaṭāmbupallavachayo bhālas-thalimallikātārtīyekshaṇahavyavāhavisarajvālāpradī-padyutiḥ sampūrṇas surasindhutūṅgalaharivāripravāhair asau śambhur maṅgalakumbhavibhramapadam bibhrat sadā pātu vaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 40).

Śiva as the Lord of prosperity, as the most auspicious, is variously known by such names as auspiciousness par excellence, the creator of auspiciousness, *Śivatāti* and *Śivaṅkara*. A Vijayanagara inscription happily puts it that his right and left eye respectively rain and nourish herbs, the eye on the forehead is the origin of water (fire), his friend is the lord of all material prosperity, his chariot the receptacle of gems (earth), his abode itself is the mountain of prosperity (*Śrīparvata*), and his bow the golden mountain (Meru): *avyāt savyavilochane trijagato vṛiṣṭyoshadhīposhake phāle vāripitā sakhā dhanapatis śrīratnagarbhā rathaḥ yasya śrīgīrī ālayah sa kṛipayā hemāchalaḥ karmukaḥ pāyād vas śivatātir āśritajanānandaikasandāyakaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 14, p. 101).

Śiva as the most auspicious removes all evil. Dance itself has this auspicious power of removing evils and obstacles. It is this importance that has been given in explaining its value as Bharata has done. This is also repeated in the *Vishṇudharmottara*.

Destroys Fear from the Three Miseries

While in the Vākāṭaka version of the early form of dancing Śiva, it is the tearing up of the veil which is stressed, in the Northern multi-armed form of Śiva, specially as in the carvings like Narteśvara from Śankarbandha in East Bengal, the sword is prominent. The purpose of the sword in the ten-armed variety of Naṭarāja is indeed worthy of note. A verse from the Kasia stone inscription explains this. Śiva destroys fear, all fear from the three miseries—*ādhyātmika*, *ādhibhautika*, *ādhidāivika*. The one subtle flame, flashing forth, cuts the knot of deep-rooted extensive ignorance with the sword of knowledge, in respect of which all the sense organs are at variance, and shines in super-human powers like the manifest, unmanifest, etc.: *yajjyotis sūkshmam ekam yad akhilakaraṇagrāmagoṣṭhīvivādiññānāsiviyastagādha-vṛitvitatatamogranthi vidyotate cha vyaktādyair bhūtibhedair vilasati ramayatpūrusham ya ...* (Corps. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 377).



FIG. 9. Śiva dancing on his bull Nandi, Pāla, 11th century A.D. Śaṅkarabandha, Dacca Museum, Bangladesh.

Architect of the Universe

The whole idea of Śiva's shaping the universe is given as it were in a single line in a Kalachuri inscription of Gayākarna, which describes him as the architect of the three worlds, poet of the Vedas, eight-fold in form and eternal in effort, knowledge and will: *trailokyasaudhaśilpī yas trivedivākyasatkaviḥ nityaprayatnabodhechchhas so'shṭamūrtis śriye'stu vah* (Corps. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 306).

The actual process of the *śilpi* at work is given in the description of Śiva's scattering of ashes. Śiva's dance causes ashes smeared on his hands to fall all scattered in their movements, forming the lines of a plan for the creation of the universe: ... *mānasūtram iva bhāratavarshasya ... tāṇḍavaprasṛitakhaṇḍaparaśubhujadaṇḍabhasmeva rekhākāreṇa patitam* (Tilakamañjarī, Vol. 3, p. 137).

Significance of Śiva on the Bull as on Apasmāra

Śiva dancing on Apasmāra connotes the eradication of ignorance, resulting in the

birth of knowledge, as the crescent culminating in the full moon indicates perfection of knowledge or omniscience. There should be similarly a connotation for Śiva's dance on the bull which is found particularly in Eastern India, mainly in Bengal (Fig. 9) and Assam, and to an extent in Orissa and Nepal. A verse attributed to Śrī Harsha elucidates the significance of Śiva on the bull. Śiva, who is the mortal foe of Kāma and has the bull under him, by his very form that proclaims him penniless, but carries a crest jewel of the nectar-rayed moon, has a message to offer to the world, almost in these words—'avoid excessive attachment to worldly pleasures and a shower (*vr̥ṣha*) of desires. Let not your mind crave for wealth, but seek and attain only the crescent lunar ray, which assures the fruit of immortality': *kāmam mā kāmayadhvam vr̥ṣham api cha bhr̥ṣam mādriyadhvam cha vitte chittam datta śrayadhvam paramamṛitaphalā yā kalā tām ihaikām ittham devas smarārīr vr̥ṣham adharacharikṛitya mūrtyaiva ditsan nisso viśvopadeśān amṛitakarakalāśekharaś trāyatām vah* (Saduktikarṇāmṛita, p. 7, 18).

The bull represents passion and desire. Śiva is Kāmāri or the foe of desire as he could overcome Cupid himself. His mount is the bull because he subdues the bull by his superior strength, not only physically derived by his close association with Śakti, personification of power itself, as the feminine part in his hermaphrodite form, but also by his yogic power which transcends all physical desires. His *ūrdhvamedhṛa*, observed in some of his sculptures in different parts of India from Bengal to Mandasore, is here significantly illustrated. He is the highest Yogi that combines in his own physical form a feminine half as well. He is above all desires and wanders in the guise of a beggar, though his merest will confers the highest prosperity on the Lord of prosperity himself, Kubera. That is why the poet shows how Śiva, by his very form, with the crescent on his head, sky-clad, with the bull beneath him, almost teaches in mute eloquence the great message he has for the world.

Dvandvasama

That Śiva is a great Yogi is indicated in all his forms and particularly in that of Naṭarāja where the snake, the most dreaded, is welcomed on his head along with the cool-rayed moon, beloved of all. The one emits deadly poison that results in death, while the other offers ambrosia which assures immortality. While all the denizens of heaven flock to him, he must



dance in the crematorium, almost converting it into a pleasance of heaven. With the devastating fire in his forehead, he has the cool and refreshing waters of the Ganges flowing on his crest. Prosperity itself is assured only through his grace, as he alone is the Overlord of all, *Īśvara*, but he needs must assume the guise of a beggar to seek alms. He is Hara, and true to his name he removes the bonds of cycles of births and deaths. Vaidya Gadādhara has put it beautifully in a verse praising Hara, the remover of all the fetters of birth cycles, who whiles away his time of eternity, enjoying his sport of welcoming with equal fervour opposites, like the heights of prosperity or the depths of beggary, partaking alike ambrosia and poison as food, and similarly satisfied with dwelling in heaven or on the burial ground, and without distinction carrying about on his person water and fire: *pīyūsheṇa viśheṇa tulyam asamam svarge smaśāne sthitiḥ nirbhedaḥ payaso'nalasya vahane yasyāviśeshagrahaḥ aiśvaryeṇa cha bhikṣhayā cha gamayan kālam samas sarvato devas svātmani kautukī haratu vas samsārapāśam haraḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛitam*, p. 8, 20).

Īśvara's Preeminence

The mighty control of Śiva over the universe, the true import of his *Īśvaratva*, his overlordship over everything; his immanence, omniscience, omnipotence and eternity, is all suggested in the concept of Śiva, the one entity surviving the deluge and controlling the elements even at that stage. He controls the waters of the deluge, the fire of the deluge, the wild blasts of wind during the deluge, and he is the very picture of peace beyond the time of the deluge, restoring the equilibrium of the universe by transmuting destruction itself into a revivification into a richer and newer form of universe that Dhātā creates at his mandate. Chittapa's verse describing the enormous power of Śiva's *iśitva* or *aiśvarya* acts as a commentary on the verse of Ratnākara describing Śiva as *Īśvara*, a term which applies only to him as the seers know it, *tvayi śabdām īśvara iti vyavasthitam kathayantyananyavishayam manīṣiṇaḥ* (*Haravijaya* 6, 21), closely following Kālidāsa's idea on the term *Īśvara*, inapplicable to any other and thereby proclaiming its aptness in connoting Śiva, *yasminniśvara ityananyavishayas śabdo yathārthākṣaraḥ* (*Vikramoravaśīyam* 1, 1). Chittapa thus invokes a benediction in a verse calling on Śiva, the Auspicious One, to protect the universe by establishing peace at the end of the deluge and beyond the horror of it, by controlling impossible elements, overcoming

the darkness of the night of the deluge, by the dark hue from his blue throat, overpowering the fury of the ocean at the time of the deluge by the waters of the heavenly stream composing his crest-garland, reducing the power of the fire of the deluge by the flames darting from the eye on his forehead, and by controlling the forty-nine deadly blasts of wind of the deluge by the sportive draughts of the monstrous snakes bejewelling him: *kaṇṭhachchāyamisheṇa kalparajanīm uttamsamandākinirūpeṇa pralayāb-dhim ūrdhvanayanavyājeṇa kalpānalam bhushā-pannagakelipānakapaṭādekonapañchāśatam vātān apyupasamharannavatu vaḥ kalpāntaśāntau śivāḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛitam*, p. 8, 22).

Śiva the Universal Soul Dancing in the Heart-Lotus

The philosophic interpretation of Śiva's dance gains an added interest in the way it is explained in the *Śivasūtras* of Vasugupta which form the basic text for the Pratyabhijñādarśana school of Kashmir Śaivism. The commentary *Vimarśinī* by Kshemarāja, a distinguished pupil of Abhinavagupta, elucidates the *sūtras* in which three are of special interest for the exposition of Śiva's dance.

The aphorism *nartaka ātmā* (*Śivasūtravimarśinī*, 3, 9), 'the dancer is the supreme self', refers to the dance of the Supreme Self that suppresses its own real glorious form in *turiyā-vasthā* and, by assuming the worldly roles in the state of awareness, sleep and dream (*jāgrat*, *sushupti*, *svapna*), exhibits its own screen. That is why Bhaṭṭa Śrī Nārāyaṇa has exclaimed in a verse that there is no one other than Śiva himself who is capable of creating the *bīja*, *garbha* and other parts of the drama having the theme of the three worlds and weave it into a web with its *prastāvana* and end: *viśiṣṭāśeśasadbījagarbham trailokyanātakam prastāvya hara samhartum tvattaḥ ko'nyaḥ kaviḥ kṣamaḥ* (*Śivasūtravimarśinī*, p. 89). He further describes Śiva Parameśvara as the stage manager of the drama of the cycle of births and deaths, who, awake when the whole world is asleep, accomplishes his purpose: *samsāranātyappravartayitā supte jagati jāgarūka eka eva parameśvaraḥ* (*Śivasūtravimarśinī*, p. 90).

The second *sūtra* is *raṅgo'ntarātmā* (*Śivasūtravimarśinī*, 3, 10). The stage *raṅga* is after the root *raj* illumine; in its eagerness to present the wonderful sport of a dance drama with the whole world as its theme, the soul desires the stage whereon to assume different casts. The inner

soul, which could conceal or project itself with splendour and exists apart from the physical form, is the very internal spirit of the life behind it and illumines the drama of the universe by its own movement.

The third *sūtra* is *prekshakānīndriyāṇi* (*Śiva-sūtravimarśinī* 3, 11). The seers witness this glorious dance drama of the real form of the inner soul in themselves by directing their sensory organs inwards, so as to be filled with the joy of the vision of the dance of *saṁsāra-nāṭya*, drama of birth cycles, and by comprehending the performance, experience the *rasa* of perfection. In this context a line from the Upanishad is also quoted to show how the seer (*dhīra*) with his mind turned inwards witnesses the inner soul and thereby enjoys the bliss of immortality (*Kaṭhopanishad* 2, 4, 1).

It is evident from this that Abhinavagupta, who wrote such an important commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra*, did it more in an attitude of dedication to the Lord of dance, whose dance itself is an elucidative commentary on the philosophy of life, the purpose of self-realisation, the vision of the Supreme Being dancing in bliss in the lotus of the heart, the vision of which is reached not by propelling the sensory organs outside, but by drawing and projecting them inward. This is the same that has been proclaimed by the Tamil saints in describing the *ānandatāṇḍava* of Śiva in *chidākāśa* in Chidambaram or Puṇḍarikapura, in the lotus of the heart.

Nāṭarāja and Raṅganātha as Dynamic and Static Aspects of Identical Concept

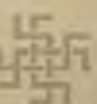
The dynamic dance of Śiva has been closely associated from early times with the static form of Śeṣhaśāyi Vishṇu (Fig. 10). Why should Śiva dance anyway is a question. This is almost answered in the query in a beautiful verse which questions how Śiva as the dancer could scatter flowers with his hand in *pushpapuṭa*. Any dancer on the stage, scattering flowers at the commencement of the dance, in honour of the celestials and the distinguished audience before him, is easily understood. But the Lord who is to be adored by all could certainly not bow to an audience, as worship of someone beyond him is an impossible fantastic concept. But there is the question in the line from the *Mahābhārata*: *kimartham tapyate tapaḥ*—Why does Vishṇu, lying on the serpent couch on the waters, perform penance? It is for the good of the universe and to set an example of exer-

tion for achievement. He has actually nothing to be active about, but yet is ever-active, even in sleep.

It is very interesting that these two iconographic concepts are brought together in several invocations and inscriptions. In the large Leiden grant of Rājārāja, the invocatory verse describes Śiva and Devī playing on Mount Kailāsa and Vishṇu in *yoganidrā* on the milky ocean. This is a significant reference to Nāṭarāja and Govindarāja who are the tutelary deities of the Chōlas. The word *viḥāra*, play, is here dance as a pastime. Śiva is the dancer and Devī is the witness or the appreciative audience. Here itself is a suggestion of the dynamic and static forms of both. As the Chōla family itself emanates from the sun, there is also a salutation to Sūrya in the verse. May the royal house of the Chōlas protect the entire world from all afflictions as long as the moon-crested Lord sports on Kailāsa with his consort, Hari sustains his yogic slumber on the serpent couch on the milky ocean, and the sun, light of the universe, completely eliminates darkness: *yāvat kailāsaśaile viharati bhagavān indumaulis svadevyā yāvat kshīrāmburāśau harir ahiśayane yoga-nidrām tanoti yāvad dhvāntam nīlāntam vyapanayati ravir viśvalokaikadīpas tāvat pāyād apāyād ayam akhilamahimāṇḍalam choḷavamśaḥ* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 22, p. 238).

In Rashtrakūṭa inscriptions, there is usually an invocatory verse which again brings together the concept of Padmanābha and Śiva together. May that Lord protect you, whose navel lotus was made his abode by Brahmā, and Śiva, by whose charming digit of the moon, the sky is adorned: *sa vovyaḍ vedhasā dhāma yannābhikamalam kṛitam haras cha yasya kāntendukalayā kam alaṅkṛitam* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 3, p. 105).

Here is a reference to Padmanābha, Vishṇu on the serpent couch in *yoganidrā* and Śiva moon-crested dancing in the sky. Reference here to the moon adorning the sky is a veiled allusion to Śiva's dance in the sky itself in *chidambara*. In another inscription of the Bāṇa king Vikramāditya II, Śiva as creator, protector and destroyer and Vishṇu as Śeṣhaśāyi are brought together. May that Śiva assure you prosperity, whose pair of feet is tinged with the cluster of red rays from innumerable gems on the crowns of the hosts of celestials bent in adoration, the true comprehension of whom is impossible even for the *Vedas* themselves, and whom the seers consider as the creator, pro-



tector and destroyer of the entire universe. May that Nārāyaṇa (whose abode is water) protect you, whose pair of feet is saluted by hosts of celestials, who lying eternally on the snake couch looks charmingly beautiful like the blue mountain Añjanādri, thrown into the ocean by *asuras* and *devas*, discarding the use of the Mandara hill for the churning of the ocean again, this time to obtain fresh and sweeter ambrosia: *yattatvapraṇāṭikṛitāvātitarām vedopī nālam yatas sthityutpattilayas samastajagatām yam manvate yogināḥ sākshānamrasurendravṛindamakuṭavyālīnaratnāvalīṣoṇāmsūvarajarañjitāṅghriyugalo bhūtyai śivas sostu vaḥ kshīrodam mathitam manobhir atulam devāsuraḥ mandaram hitvākshipta ivāñjanādrir iva yas tatrādhikam rājate yo bho-gīndranivishṭamūrtir anīsam bhūyomṛitasyāptaye rakshed vaḥ suravṛindavanditapadadvandvas sa nārāyaṇaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 3, p. 75).

Śiva's purpose of three eyes is indeed very suggestive. He is of the nature of light. Śiva himself in one of his forms, the Liṅodbhava, is a *sthāṇu* or a pillar of light. There is a medieval verse which describes the flame issuing from Śiva's head as a flame of knowledge, as the flame darting to suggest his omniscience. The purpose of his three eyes—fire, sun and moon—is to burn the miseries of the world, to illumine and gladden the world. It is a fire not for consuming the good in the universe, but only to destroy the evil. It burns only the miseries of the world, and the light issuing from it illumines and gladdens: *tat pātu vas tritayam īśvaralochanānām agnyarkasomamayamūrtidharam samantāt yallokadukkhadahanaṇpratiḥāsānādisvāpyāyanāni kṛipayānudinam karoti* (Epigraph. Ind. 9, p. 185). This verse, from the Sihawa stone inscription of Karṇa Rājā, is most illuminating in giving the true nature of Śiva. It may be recalled that the fire that Śiva carries in his hand also similarly destroys and protects.

Similarly, the Banahalli plates of Kadamba Kṛishṇa Varma, gives exactly the same attributes to Viṣṇu as for Śiva, the *pañchakṛitya*. Viṣṇu creates, preserves, destroys and creates illusion in the world. This is the *Vaiṣṇava Māyā*, which he again removes for granting liberation: *jagatpravṛittisamhārasṛiṣṭimāyādharo hariḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 6, p. 18).

The *pralaya tāṇḍava* of Śiva is described in a *stotra* where he is pictured as dancing by himself, alone, when the entire universe has been burnt out: *kalpāntakāle bhuvanāni dagdhvā viśvāni yo nṛityati bhūrilīlaḥ sa kālarudrovatu mām niśīthe*.

The same is found in the case of Viṣṇu also in the Pehoa *praśasti* of Mahendrapāla. Viṣṇu, as Śeṣhaśāyī, alone sleeps when at the deluge, the moon is gone, the mountains have disappeared, the sun extinguished, mankind lost, the stars fallen, the earth gone under and the oceans, all become one mass of water: *yāte yāmavatīpatau śikharishu kshāmeshu sarvātmanā dhvaste dhvāntarīpau jane vighalite sraste cha tāragāṇe bhrashte bhūvalaye gateshu cha tathā ratnākareshvekatām eko yas svapiti pradhānapurushaḥ pāyāt sa vas śārṅgabhrīt* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 244).

Ratnākara, in his monumental *Haravijaya*, wonderfully brings together the concept of Śeṣhaśāyī Viṣṇu and Nāṭeśa. While Śeṣha, who is *aśeṣha* or endless, with the power of immanence of the Almighty, common to both—Viṣṇu also means immanent, Īśvara signifies the all-powerful and all-embracing. The context here is *pralaya*, the universe in the waters of the deluge. The only survivors in the deluge are Śeṣhaśāyī and Nāṭeśa; and Śeṣha still holds up the universe on his hoods in the *pralaya* waters. At the end of the *kalpa*, in the deluge on the milky ocean, the foe of Madhu, with his *yoganidrā*, disturbed by the pandemonium of wondrous action and speech, as the three worlds entered his stomach, made Śeṣha, the only surviving one, his couch to rest on. The same Śeṣha, experiencing excruciating pain, still manages to breathe, while holding up the earth, slipped from the shoulders of the elephants of the quarters, jerked down by the movements of the *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva, in consonance with the commencement of the deluge of the universe: *kalpāvadhāvadhipayodhi yamekam eva baddhāspadam madhurīṣu śayanīchakāra kukshipravishṭabhuvanatrayachitreshṭavyāhāravibhramavilūptasamādhinidraḥ śeṣhas sa yasya bhuvanapralayāvatārāparyāptatāṇḍavaparikramanamyamānam dikkuñjarāmsaśikharaskhalitam kathamchidurvīm dadhachchhvasiti gāḍham upodhakhedaḥ* (Haravijaya 36. 33-34).

In Chidambaram, there is a happy blend of Nāṭarāja and Rāṅganātha as Śeṣhaśāyī, as in close proximity, Viṣṇu as Govindrāja is asleep on his serpent couch. The significance of these two, almost identical, concepts has been made very clear in an illuminating essay by B. R. Rajam Ayyar in his delightful book, *Rambles in Vedānta*. Viṣṇu is not awake, nor asleep, nor in a dream, but in a state beyond all these—*turiyāvasthā*, beyond *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *sushupti*. The conch in his hand symbolises ether, the sky, receptacle of sound. The sound



FIG. 10. Raṅganātha as Padmanābha watching Śiva's dance, late Chera, 18th century A.D. Padmanābhapuram Palace, Kerala.

is produced. Like the drum of Naṭarāja, the conch of Śeṣhaśāyī produces sound and this is a symbol of creation. The wheel or the flaming *chakra* is a symbol of destruction and transformation. It does not kill, but purifies. Like the flame in Naṭarāja's hand, it is the means of rejuvenation, a new life vouchsafed after destroying dross. It is also a symbol of the cycle of births and deaths, the *māyā* of Viṣṇu, the very charm of life, which revolves in an eddy, in which, ignorant souls lose themselves and are saved only by his grace. Comparable to this is the *kuṇḍalī*, the snake that curls in circles, sheds slough and dons fresh skin every time, suggesting a perennial entry into and exit from life in a new and ever new phantasy of origination and demise, constituting the cycle of existence. Śiva's snake encircling the hand, his ear lobe, his matted locks, his wrists and even his ankles, his waist, are all *kuṇḍalas* or circlets indicative of this. In the form of Naṭarāja, there is a hand around which a snake is shown encircled, or he holds a reptile which entwines itself into circles. The *gadā* of Viṣṇu is the power to eliminate or destroy and protect. The *gadā* is symbol of Viṣṇu's *prabhutva*, to protect the weak and destroy the evil. The hand of Śiva in *abhaya* itself suggests this. The hand for protection assures protection, not to the wicked but to the good. The lotus in the hand of Viṣṇu is a symbol of *rasa* (water), beauty, charm, gaiety of the world, all that is good, including deeds of merit. One has to bring to one's mind the colour analysis of Ruskin who waxes eloquent in describing the glory of the Lord's creation, wherein attractive and inviting colours as of butterflies, birds, flowers and other sweet, pure, innocent and lovable objects of the universe are a contrast to the hideous hue of detestable objects like the toad, viper, alligator and so forth. The pleasing hue of the lotus is an indication of the charm of righteous life, which alone in the perception of the Almighty is life. Similarly, in the case of dancing Śiva, the purest celestial river on his *jaṭās*, with the sweet and inviting moon in its vicinity, appearing almost like a lotus sprung out of the water, is an indication of the same aspect. Śiva crushes ignorance under foot, destroys it in whatever form it comes, whether it is like the dark monster of an elephant or the hideous dwarf crushed by him. It is the symbol of overcoming evil even as he dances. In the other case, even as he is

asleep, Viṣṇu destroys Madhu and Kaiṭabha, the twin monsters of ignorance, and the destruction is by just crushing them, as he is still recumbent.

The spirit of bringing together, in contemplating the Lord of the stage, dancing and asleep, accounts for such hymnal examples as the one of Appayya Dikshita when he visited Chidambaram and composed verses simultaneously referring to Naṭarāja and Raṅga-nātha (in Chidambaram styled Govindarāja). At the sight of the two images, so close together, conveying identical import, the great philosopher burst into poetry. I bow to the Lord of Mā (Lakṣmī) and the Lord of Umā, the god with the hooded snake as his couch, and the celestial who wears as his ornament the hooded snake, the destroyer of the demon Mura and the vanquisher of the demons of Pura (Tripura), the opponent of the demon Bāṇa and the enemy of Asamabāṇa (Kāma, whose flowery arrows are odd in number—five). Let him wear yellow silk or even the quarters, let him go on an eagle mount or the humped bull, let him sleep or gaily dance on the stage, I see no difference in the Almighty: *māramāṇam umāramāṇam phaṇa-dharatalpam phaṇādharākālpam muramathanam puramathanam vande bāṇārim asamabāṇārim. vastām piśaṅgam vasanam diśo vā garutmatā yātu kakudmatā vā nidrātu vā nṛityatu vā dhiraṅgam bhedaṁ na paśyāmi parasya vastunaḥ* (Appayyadikshītendravijaya, p. 79).

In the same strain, Samarapuṅgava Dikshita, a great poet and a disciple of Appayya Dikshita, describes the oneness of Raṅgaśāyī, the sleeper on the stage, Viṣṇu at Śrīrangam, and Śiva the great dancer in the temple at Jambukeśvaram, contiguous to Śrīraṅgam. May that emperor of all celestials protect us, who has his sportive residence in the island on the river Kāverī, the daughter of the Sahya mountain, to whom the ocean-girdled earth may be a spouse or a chariot, the lover of the blue lilies (moon), his eye or the crest jewel, the great ocean his abode or his quiver, the Lord of hooded serpents, his sleeping couch or his bracelets: *samsārī syandanī vā jaladhiraśanayā lochanī śekhārī vā netrā nīlotpalānām udadhiparivṛdhenālayī tūṇavān vā paryāṅkī kaṅkaṇī vā phaṇidharapatinā sahyabhūbhṛitkumārīmadyālāṅkārālilāvasatir avatu mām devatāsārvabhaumaḥ* (Yātrāprabandha 5, 129).

KARANAS PRESENTED IN SIVA'S TANDAVA

Śiva is conceived as the supreme master of dance as of music. He is, even in early Pallava sculpture, shown as the preceptor of the *tāṇḍava* to Taṇḍu and Bharata, the great exponents of this art. As this is primarily a visual art, great dexterity is required in the appropriate use of limbs and organs to convey the exact import of the literary piece intended to be portrayed in the language of gesticulation. The great architect of the Brīhadiśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr, at the instance of Rājarāja and Rājendra, great patrons of art and culture and particularly of dance, has carved a series of panels depicting Śiva himself performing these *karaṇas*. It may be recalled that the Chōḷa country was a land of culture and art, as reflected in such names of regions as *nitya-vinoda vaḷanāḍu*, where the emperor had presented a fabulous number of four hundred dancers to the great temple, where he consecrated the gigantic Śivaliṅga, named after himself Rāja-rājeśvara, and the most magnificent Naṭarāja in metal in the south. This series of dance panels is a triumphant expression of the emperor's devotion to *Āḍavallān*, the Lord of dance of Chidambaram, who was his most adored deity, and in whose presence, in the golden hall of that great temple, he had depicted himself, more than once, with a full retinue, including his queens, and probably his sister also, in the paintings that adorn the walls of the perambulatory passage around the central cell.

This is almost a reiteration of the attributes to Śiva, in the opening verse of *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, *āṅgikam bhuvanam yasya vāchikam sarva-vāñmayam, āhāryam chandratārādi tam vande sāttvikam śivam*, where the Lord's movement of the body is the whole world, whose speech is the entire expanse of language, whose adornment and attire are the moon and stars and the like and who is the very embodiment of moods.

The panels start from the east (Fig. 1) and proceed clockwise on the walls, to the south, west and north. There are ten *karaṇas* facing east, twenty-seven south, thirty-one west and thirteen north. The whole series has not been completed, and of the hundred and eight there are only

eighty-one numbers: and the unhewn blocks of stone further up on the north (Fig. 2) and eastern walls show that there was a sudden halt. Even the carvings themselves have not been given that finish that would have been expected if they had been carved at a leisurely pace by the sculptor. He was probably intending to finish roughly the entire series before he could chisel out the details for all of them. The general proportion and the flavour of the sculptural mode is clearly early Chōḷa of the beginning of the 11th century, co-eval with the construction of the Brīhadiśvara temple itself.

Śiva in all these panels is easily distinguished by his four arms and the attributes he carries, like the axe, trident, snake and so forth. It is interesting to compare this earlier series, which is nearer the spirit of Bharata's text, with the later series, also of the Chōḷa period from the *gopura* at Chidambaram. In describing the panels one after the other, the number of the sculptured panel is mentioned first and the name of the *karaṇa*, with the number according to the order in Bharata's text is given next. Where there is no comment, the panel here and the panel at Chidambaram correspond exactly. Where they differ, the differences are pointed out, and the proximity of the *karaṇas* to the text in their portrayal is also indicated, whether at Tañjāvūr or at Chidambaram.

The sculptural panel number 1 (Fig. 3) represents the first *karaṇa* according to Bharata, i.e. *talapushpapuṭa*. Though Śiva is four-armed, his main hands are brought together in *pushpapuṭa*, while the other two hands hold, one the drum and the other, what looks like fire. The text is correctly followed—*vāme pushpapuṭaḥ pārśve*. Even the commentary *vāmapārśve saushṭhavana vāmastanakshetre pushpapuṭahastabandha iti* is clearly followed by representing the hands in union nearer the left side of the chest. There is a slight bend towards the left which is also prescribed by the text *sannatam pārśvam*. The right foot is in *agratalasañchāra*, with heel raised and the toes stretched on the ground. All this is clearly seen in the Brīhadiśvara temple panel, which is even better than the Chidambaram one in illustrating the *karaṇa*. This

karāṇa is for scattering flowers in adoration at the commencement of dance and is specially referred to in appropriate context in the *nāndī śloka* of Harsha's *Ratnāvalī*, *pādāgrasthitayā muhus stanabhareṇānīṭayā namratām śambhos saprihalochanatrāyapadam yānti tādarādhanē hrīmatyā śirasīhitaḥ sapulakasvedodgamotkampayā viśliṣhyān kusumāñjalir girijayā kshipto' natre pātu vaḥ*. The name *talapushpapuṭa* is itself explained by Abhinavagupta, as from the position of both



FIG. 1. Beginning of the panels illustrating *karāṇas* demonstrated by Śiva himself, towards the end here is *talapushpapuṭa*, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. They begin on the east corridor, south wing of the first floor of the vimāna.

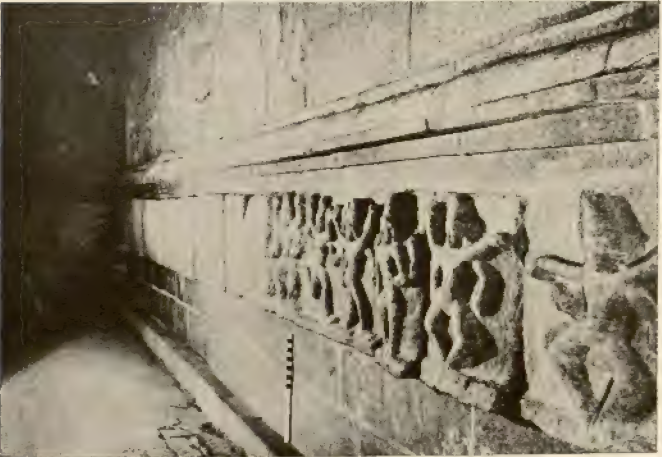


FIG. 2. Panels illustrating the *karāṇas* demonstrated by Śiva himself, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. Some of them towards the end are unfinished on the north corridor of the first storey of the vimāna.

feet and hands in *agratalapāda* and *pushpapuṭa* respectively, *agratalapādapushpapuṭayogādekadeśasūchanam nāmedam talapushpapuṭam iti*.

Sculptured panel 2 (Fig. 4) in this series represents *svastikarechita* which is the seventh *karāṇa* according to Bharata's text. There is thus here a slight transposition by bringing in a later *karāṇa* earlier. Similarly, two earlier ones are shown later. Three *karāṇas*, *varṭita*, *valītoru* and *apaviddha* are unrepresented.

The *svastikarechita* is a repeated moment with first the hands stretched in *rechita*, bent (*āvīddha*)



FIG. 3. Panel showing *talapushpapuṭa*, *karāṇa 1*, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 4. Panel No. 2 *svastikarechita*, *karāṇa 7*, Chola 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

to form a *svastika* against the chest and released again to finally rest on the waist. It is this position of the hands resting on the waist that is shown in the sculpture, both in the Brihadiśvara temple and at Chidambaram. This *karāṇa* is for entertaining the audience, i.e. through pure dance following *tāla* and *laya*, i.e. *nṛtta*: *etachcha yatra nṛttam eva prādhānyenā' bhineyam tāvatkālam praharshādīyoge tatra tatra prayujyate*.

The sculptured panels 3 and 4 are not intended to represent any particular *karāṇa*.

Sculptured panel 5 (Fig. 5) represents *samanakha*, *karāṇa 5* of the text, where it is a *ṛiju* or straight position, as one normally stands. That is why Bharata describes it *dehas svābhāviko yatra bhavet samanakham*. This is the first position at the commencement of dance—*etachcha prathamapraveśe nṛtte dṛśyate*.

It is noteworthy that in all these cases where Śiva has four hands, it is the principal hands

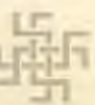




FIG. 5. Panel No. 5, samanakha, karana 5, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 8. Sculptured panels No. 9 and 10; 9 is nikuttaka, karana 9, Chola 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 6. Panels No. 6 and 7; 6 is lina, karana 6, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 9. Sculptured panel 11, kañichinna, karana 11, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 7. Sculptured panel 8, māṇḍalasvastika, karana 8, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 10. Sculptured Panels 12 and 13, ardharechitaka and vakshasvastika, karanas 12 and 13, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

that are shown in the appropriate dance posture. Thus, here the principal pair of arms is shown hanging at ease.

Of the next two sculptural panels, 6 and 7 (Fig. 6), the former represents *līna*, *karāṇa* 6, with the hands in *patāka* brought together to form *añjali*, and with the head and neck a little bent in salutation. The sculpture clearly follows the text *patākāñjali vakshastham prasāritaśirodharam nihañchitāmsakūṭam cha tallīnam karaṇam*. This is to convey the sense of friendly request, and not adoration of gods, when *añjali* goes over the head—*etachcha priyapārathanavākyaḥbhīnaye, devatāpraṇāme tu śīrasthaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 8 (Fig. 7) represents *maṇḍalasvastika*, which is *karāṇa* 8 of Bharata's text. It clearly indicates the hands in *svastika* and the legs in *maṇḍalasthāna*, the feet a little apart. However, the hands in *svastika* do not have the palms and fingers facing the audience as explained in Abhinavagupta's commentary. *Prāṇmukha* no doubt definitely means this; but both at Tañjāvūr and at Chidambaram, the representations appear to reverse this, as the palm is inward, facing the chest, rather than the audience. This is to convey the idea of repudiation—*nikāravākyaḥarthābhīnaye*.

Of the two sculptured panels beyond this, number 9 and 10 (Fig. 8), the former is *nikuṭṭaka*, which is *karāṇa* 9 of Bharata's text. Here there is a lowering and raising of the body with the hands and legs in action, the former with the fingers in *alapallava*, suggesting wonder, coming down and going up over the shoulder in *nikuṭṭana*, as the legs also move in consonance. The text is *nikuṭṭitau yadā hastau svabāhuśīrasan'tare pāḍau nikuṭṭitau chaiva jñeyam tattu nikuṭṭakam*. *Nikuṭṭana* itself is *unnamanam vinamanam syād aṅgasya nikuṭṭanam*. The *karāṇa* is to imply self adulation—*svātmasambhāvanavishaye*.

Sculptured panel number 11 (Fig. 9) is *kaṭichinna karāṇa*, which is the eleventh in the text of Bharata. The sculptural panel here is different from that at Chidambaram in regard to the hands and probably represents a different movement, chosen by the sculptor. The main feature about *kaṭichinna* is the twist or the gyratory movement of the waist—*kaṭimadhyasya valanāchchhinnā*. The *pallava* pose of the hands over the shoulders is to be repeated. Since *pallava* is holding the hands in *patāka*, across at the wrist in *svastika* and taken apart, the position as represented in the sculpture from



FIG. 11. Panels No. 13 and 14, *vakshassvastika* and *unmattaka*, *karāṇas* 13 and 14, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadishvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

Tañjāvūr is nearer the text than that at Chidambaram—*mañibandhanamuktau tu patākau pallavau smṛitau*. This *karāṇa* is mainly to express wonder *vismayaḥpradhānavākyaḥarthābhīnaye chāsya prayogaḥ*. The initial use of *pallava* itself is to suggest wonder—*vismayaḥpradhānavākyaḥarthābhīnaye vātra pallavasyāḍau prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 12 is *karāṇa* 12 (Fig. 10), *ardharechitaka*, in Bharata's text. The text is followed both here, as well as at Chidambaram, though the hands in one panel are reversed in the other. As explained in Abhinavagupta's commentary, while the *sthāna* is *maṇḍala*, there is the *nikuṭṭita* action in the right foot, the right hand extended, while the left, in *khaṭakāmukha*, is on the chest—*maṇḍala eva sthānake sthitvā karo vakshasi khaṭakāmukhaḥ suchīmukhena hastenāpagamaḥpūrvakam viddho nikaṭayojitaḥ*. The *karāṇa* connotes inappropriate action—*etachchāsamañjasacheshṭāpradhānavākyaḥarthābhīnaye*.

Sculptured panel number 13 (Fig. 11) corresponds to *vakshassvastika* which is also number 13 in the text. This clearly follows the text both here as well as at Chidambaram, as both the hands and the feet are crossed—*svastikau charaṇau yatra karau vakshasi rechitau nikuñchitam tathā vaksho vakshassvastikam eva tat*.

In the Tañjāvūr panel, however, the *nikuñchita* of the chest is clearly indicated, which is very significant, as this is *vakshassvastika*, and the chest has to bend forward a bit—*ābhugnam tad uraḥ*. This point is missed at Chidambaram. The hands in *saṁdamśa*, which are not specified in the text, probably suggest Śiva's teaching aspect. This *karāṇa* is only to convey the sense



FIG. 12. Panels No. 15 and 16, svastika and prishthasvastika, karanas, 15 and 16, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur.



FIG. 13. Panel No. 17, diksvastika, karana 17, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur.



FIG. 14. Panels No. 18 and 19, alataka and katishama, karanas 18 and 19, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur.

of bashfulness and compassion: *lajjitajalanu-tāpapradhānavākyārthe evāsya prayojanam.*

Sculptured panel number 14 (Fig. 11) is *unmatka*, karana 14 in the text. In this, however, the Chidambaram panel scores over the Tanjavur one, as the hands thrown up sidewise in *rechita* at Chidambaram are nearer the text—*rechitau tu karau yadā*. In the Tanjavur panel, the hands are not clearly *rechita*. This karana is to connote the pride of glamorous wifehood—*etasyātisau-bhāgyādi janitagarvavishayaḥ prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel 15 (Fig. 12) is *svastika*, karana 15 of the text. Since both the hands and feet are in *svastika* in both the panels, they clearly follow the definition of the text. This karana is to suggest hate, negation and secrecy—*doeshanani-shedharahasye cha vākyārthe' bhinetavyesya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel 16 (Fig. 12) is *prishthasvastika*, karana 16 of the text. In the Chidambaram panel, it is a complete back view, while the Tanjavur panel depicts a twist of the hip and buttocks, and is very expressive. Several quick movements of the hands and feet, composing the hands and feet as described in the text, cannot be expected to be shown in one moment of the karana. Yet, the position depicted is suggestive of the *prishthasvastika*. The purpose of this karana is the same as of the earlier one, though because of the back view it to some degree suggests battle.

In the same way, sculptured panel 17 (Fig. 13), depicting *diksvastika*, karana 17, clearly follows the text by almost suggesting a three-quarters view of the hands and legs in trying to create the *svastika* pose from an angle. In the panel at Chidambaram, it represents the back view and it is only the profile of the face which could suggest *diksvastika*. As this karana is a continuation of the earlier two, it should weave out a picture of *nṛitta*, pure dance cadence the scope of which excludes conveying an idea through gesticulation. Abhinavagupta explains its use as *prayogaschāsya gītaparivarteshu*, which *parivarta* of limbs is explained further on in the text as *yadā gītavaśādāṅgam bhūyo bhūyo nivartate tatrādyam abhineyam syāchchhesham nṛitena yojayet*.

The sculptured panel 18 (Fig. 14) corresponds to *alataka*, karana 18 of the text. The panel here at Tanjavur is somewhat different from the one at Chidambaram, but here the right hand and the left leg are in a correct position,



FIG. 15. Panels No. 20 and 21, ākshiptarechita and vikshiptākshipta, karāṇas 20 and 21, Chōḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 17. Panels No. 24 and 25, bhujaṅgaṭrāsita and ūrdhvajānu, karāṇas 24 and 25, Chōḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 16. Panels No. 22 and 23, ardhasvastika and añchita, karāṇas 22 and 23, Chōḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 18. Panels No. 26 and 27, nikuñchita and mattalli, karāṇas 26 and 27, Chōḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

according to Abhinavagupta's description, i.e. the *nitamba hasta* for the hand and the approaching *ūrdhvajānu* in the case of the leg. This *karāṇa* finds its use for light pure dance—*prayogaśchāsyā lalitaṇṭittavishaye*.

Sculptured panel number 19 (Fig. 14) corresponds to *kaṭisama*, *karāṇa* number 19 of the text. In this, there is agreement between the panels here and at Chidambaram. In the Tañjāvūr panel, the position of the leg clearly suggests *svastikāpasrita*, as required in the text, i.e. the release of the feet from *svastika*, and the hands are on the navel and the hip—*nābhi-kaṭi-sthītau*, and there is a slight bend and rise of the chest in both the panels to answer *pārśvam udvāhitam*; and *udvāhita* as explained by Bharata is *ūrdhva-gatam uro jñeyam*. This is a *karāṇa* to be used by the *sūtradhāra* for the worship of *jarjara*, Indra's

dhvaja, that was used to overcome obstacles—*jarjarābhimantraṇāvasare sūtradhāreṇāyam prayoktavyaḥ*.

Sculptured panel 20 (Fig. 15) corresponds to *ākshiptarechita*, *karāṇa* 20 of the text. In the sculpture from Tañjāvūr, the left hand is on the chest and the other almost *rechita*, or *ākshipta*, as Abhinavagupta has described it. The legs also follow the commentary in being *añchita* and *sūchī*. This *karāṇa* presents bestowal and receipt—*tyāgopādānaparamparātmani cha vākyaṛthe'bhinetavye'sya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 21 (Fig. 15) corresponds to *vikshiptākshipta*, *karāṇa* 21. The panels at Chidambaram and Tañjāvūr differ in the portrayal of the *karāṇas*. But there is a movement of stretching forward the hand and leg



FIG. 19. Panels No. 27 and 28, mattalli and ardhamattalli, karaṇas 26 and 27, Chōla, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 20. Panels No. 29 and 30, rechitanikuṭṭita and pādāpavid-dhaka, karaṇas 29 and 30, Chōla, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

alternatively, as indicated at Chidambaram, while at Tañjāvūr, the movement in the sculpture, as well as the stretching out the right leg, indicates the same attempt at fulfilling the definition of this *karaṇa* according to the text. This *karaṇa* is to convey the sense of simple movement backward and forward or in a fight—*gamanāgamanapradhāne vākyārthe chāsya prayogaḥ, yuddhaniyuddhachārīsthānake sañchāre vā*.

Sculptured panel number 22 (Fig. 16) corresponds to *ardhasvastika*, *karaṇa* 22 of the text. Both the panels beautifully agree and also clearly follow the text, as the legs are in *svastika*, the left hand on the chest and the right hand on the hip. It should not be said that the sculpture does not follow the text since the right hand is not in *karihasta*. The text *karihastaṃ cha dakṣiṇam* is to be corrected to *kaṭihastaṃ cha dakṣiṇam*, which would clearly support the sculpture. Abhinavagupta specially notes the variant readings—*kaṭihastaṃ iti kechit paṭhanti*. As this is *svastika* only of the legs, it is *ardhasvastika*, *pādābhyāmeva svatikayogād ardhasvastikam*.

Sculptured panel 23 (Fig. 16) corresponds to *añchita*, *karaṇa* 23 of the text. This *karaṇa* is correctly shown at Tañjāvūr, while at Chidambaram, the sculptor has confused *karihasta* for *kaṭihasta*. The text clearly states that this *karaṇa* is to be exactly like the previous one and one of the arms is to approach the nose, as depicted here. The right hand in *karihasta* at Chidambaram is explained by mistaking the text. It should be *kaṭihasta*. This is to express one's great wonder and curiosity—*svātiśayakautukapradhāne vākyārthe prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel 24 (Fig. 17) corresponds to *bhujāṅatrāsita*, *karaṇa* 24 of the text. The main points here are the position of the leg and the twist of the waist. As there is no specific mention of the position of the hands, the hands of the previous *karaṇas* continue. Viewed this way, the Tañjāvūr panel is very faithful. The text, *kuñchitam pādāṃ utkṣipya tryaśram ūrum vivartayet*, is clearly shown in Tañjāvūr. However, the Chidambaram panel shows the hands differently. Abhinavagupta suggests *dolāhasta* and *khaṭakāmukha* for the hands. At Chidambaram it is *daṇḍahasta* and *abhaya*. In a way, therefore, the Tañjāvūr panel is closer to Abhinavagupta. The position of the legs, however, is a completed action at Tañjāvūr, while it is being brought into position at Chidambaram. This is a *karaṇa* to faithfully portray the natural movement of fright at the sight of a snake—*karaṇam idam uktarūpam āśāṅkitadrīṣṭanikaṭatas sarpatrāsāviśṭasyeva gatisamvarte bhujāṅatrāsitam*.

Sculptured panel number 25 (Fig. 17) answers *ūrdhvajānu*, *karaṇa* 25 of the text. As far as the legs are concerned, the position is answered in both the panels. The text, *kuñchitam pādāṃ utkṣipya jānustanasamam nyaset*, is faithfully followed, but as the hands are optional, they differ in both the panels. The hemistich, *prayogavaśagau hastau*, gives the sculptor the option. In the Tañjāvūr panel, which is in consonance with the commentary, the left hand is in *khaṭakāmukha* on the chest, while the right hand is in *ūrdhvamukha alapallava*.

Sculptured panel number 26 (Fig. 18) corresponds to *nikuñchita*, *karaṇa* 26 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, the raised leg, *vṛīschika*, is not so



FIG. 21. Panel No. 31, valita, karaṇa 31, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 22. Panel No. 32, ghūrṇita, karaṇa 32, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 23. Panels No. 33 and 34, lalita and daṇḍapaksha, karaṇas 33 and 34, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

high up as in the Chidambaram panel, but the hands are nearer the commentary of Abhinavagupta than in the Chidambaram figure. One is on the chest and the other nearer the head, as Abhinavagupta would have them be—*paśchāt prasāritam charaṇam kṛtvā tadekam cha hastam śīraḥpārśvakshetre arālam dvitīyam cha nāsagrakshetrānusāri vakshasyarārameva kuryāt*. This karaṇa is to indicate eagerness to cross the ocean, like Hanumān, or argumentation, or deep meditation, *etachchākāśagamanonmukhavitarkaprāṇidhānādipradhāne vākyārthābhinaye*.

Sculptured panel number 27 (Fig. 18) corresponds to *mattalli*, karaṇa number 27 of the text. This is nearly like the Chidambaram panel, though not completely. The left hand is away in action. The motion of the feet is indicated in both and the total action of *udveshṭita* and *apa-veshṭita* is indicated in the fast moving upward and downward position of the hands in the Tañjāvūr panel. Abhinavagupta states that the usage of the plural in *udveshṭitāpaviddhaiścha hastaiḥ* is to enjoin continuous action for the hands—*bahuvachanam punaḥpunarittam kṛiyeti sūchayati*. This karaṇa is to express the uninterrupted abandon of one intoxicated *madanam mattam tanotīti mattalli madotkalasya vīpsāyogena karaṇena*.

Sculptured panel number 28 (Fig. 19) corresponds to *ardhamattalli*, karaṇa 28 of the text. Both the panels agree and the left hand is raised in *rechita* while the right rests on the hip, as required in the text. The action of the feet is also clearly indicated in the sculpture. This is to express excess of intoxication *taruṇama-davishayaḥ prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 29 (Fig. 20) corresponds to *rechitanikuṭṭita*. In this case, the Chidambaram panel follows the text better. At Tañjāvūr, the right hand is not fully *rechita*, and the left hand is not at all *dolā*. The movement of the hands in this karaṇa suggests movement forwards and backwards—*dolāhastasya preṅkholitam yadvartanayā gamanāgamane sūchayati*.

Sculptured panel number 30 (Fig. 20) represents *pādāpaviddhaka*, karaṇa 30 of the text. Both the panels are alike and follow the text. The legs, which were together are now apart, in depicting *sūchī* and *apakrānta*. The hands, in *khaṭakāmukha*, are just above the navel and follow the text.

Sculptured panel number 31 (Fig. 21) represents *valita*, karaṇa 31 in the text also. The two



FIG. 24. Panel No. 35, bhujāṅgatrastarechita, karaṇa 35, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 25. Panels No. 36 and 37, nūpura and vaiśākha rechitaka, karaṇas 36 and 37, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 26. Panels No. 38 and 39, bhramaraka and chatura, karaṇas 38 and 39, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

panels are different. While the Chidambaram panel is very far removed from the text, the panel from Tañjāvūr follows it closely. The right leg is in *sūchī*, the gyration of the hip and, consequently, of the torso also, is clearly shown, and of the hands, the *apaviddha sūchī* is seen in the left hand; while the right hand, which is also in *sarpaśīrsha*, is away from the body. Can it be that it answers the commentary *sa deha-kshetrādapasritaḥ kāryaḥ* ?

Sculptured panel 32 (Fig. 22) represents *ghūrṇita*, karaṇa 32 of the text. Both the panels follow the text. In fact, there is great action in the Tañjāvūr panel, where, in addition to the charming flexion in the body, the legs slightly removed from *svastika*—*svastikāpasritaḥ pādau*—make the left hand in *dolā*, and the right hand in *vartitāghūrṇita*, twirling around, more effective.

Sculptured panel 33 (Fig. 23) corresponds to *lalita*, karaṇa 33 of the text. The Tañjāvūr panel shows the left hand in *dolā*, instead of *karihasta*, while the right hand is *vivartita*. The Chidambaram panel no doubt shows the *karihasta*, but on the wrong side, as it is the right hand which is in *karihasta*. The *kuṭṭita* of the foot is clear in both. If only the Chidambaram panel had reversed the position of the hands, it would have been an ideal representation of the description of the text. Abhinavagupta describes the stages of the *vartita* movement of the right hand from *nitamba* and *keśabandha*, as it finally rests near the ear in *tripatāka*. This is to indicate a certain coquettish grace in dance.

Sculptured panel number 34 (Fig. 23) represents *daṇḍapaksha*, karaṇa 34 of the text. Though both are almost alike, the panel at Tañjāvūr is nearer the text, as the *latāhastā* rests on the *ūrdhvajānu* leg, as required in the text. At Chidambaram, the hand is raised more than required, almost in *rechita*. The placing of the hand on the raised knee is clear here and answers *ūrdhvajānu vidhāyātha tasyopari latām nyaset*.

Sculptured panel number 35 (Fig. 24) answers *bhujāṅgatrastarechita*, karaṇa 35 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, the position of the legs is in *bhujāṅgatrāsita* as required, and the hands are also to the left, though, however, not fully *rechita*, as specified. In the Chidambaram panel, the hands are even more expressive and clearly *rechita*—*yatrobhāvapi rechitau vāmapārśvasthitau hastau*, though the position of the feet is not



FIG. 27. Panels No. 40 and 41, *bhujaṅgāñchitaka* and *daṇḍakarechita*, *karāṇas* 40 and 41, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur.



FIG. 28. Panels No. 42 and 43, *vṛśchikakuṭṭita* and *kaṭibhrānta*, *karāṇas* 42 and 43, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur.



FIG. 29. Panels No. 44 and 45, *latāvṛśchika* and *chhinna*, *karāṇas* 44 and 45, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur.

correct. This is to suggest a moment of great alarm, after *bhujaṅgatrāsita*.

Sculptured panel 36 is *nūpura, karāṇa* (Fig. 25) number 36 of the text. In both the panels the *karāṇa* is correctly depicted. The hands thrown about in *latārechitaka* are expressive and probably it is at Tanjavur, where the gyration of the hip is clearer, because of the graceful movement of the torso expressed—*trikam suvalitam kritvā*, when Abhinavagupta adds *bhramarikayā chāryā trikavalanam kritvā*.

Sculptured panel number 37 (Fig. 25) is *vaiśākha rechitaka, karāṇa* 37 of the text. It is better expressed in the Tanjavur panel, as *rechita* of the *hasta, pāda, kati* and *grīvā* is complete and the *vaiśākhashthāna*, following the text, *rechitau hastapādau cha kati grīvā cha rechitā vaiśākhashthānakenaitad bhavet*, also is portrayed; but in the Chidambaram panel the *sthāna* is a little different. This *karāṇa* is in the sense of conveying or offering—*etad karāṇam abhivāhane*.

Sculptured panel number 38 (Fig. 26) is *bhramaraka, karāṇa* 38 of the text. Both the panels follow the text. The twist of the torso is, however, clearer in the Chidambaram panel. The *udveshītālāpallava* of the hands is clearer in the Tanjavur panel. This *karāṇa* indicates a haughty wheeling around—*etaduddhataparibhramāṇavishaye prayoktavyam*.

Sculptured panel number 39 (Fig. 26) answers *chatura, karāṇa* 39 of the text. In the Tanjavur panel, the left hand is *alapallava*, i.e. *añchita*—*añchita ityalapallavaḥ*, the right hand in *chatura* against chest and the right leg in *kuṭṭita*, which is all quite correct. In the Chidambaram panel, the left hand is in *daṇḍa* or *karihasta*. The text, *dakṣiṇaḥ kuṭṭitaḥ pādah*, which is very important in the *chatura* pose, is clear in both. This *karāṇa* is to show the attitude of wonder in the jestor—*etad vidūshakasya savismayasūchyabhinayādaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 40 (Fig. 27) refers to *bhujaṅgāñchitaka, karāṇa* 40 of the text. The Chidambaram panel correctly follows the text, except that the hands are reversed. In the panel from Tanjavur, the hands are not close to the text. The text, *bhujaṅgatrāsitaḥ pādo dakṣiṇo rechitaḥ karaḥ latākhyascha karo vāmo bhujaṅgāñchitakam bhavet*, would have been excellently answered if the position of the hands at Chidambaram had been reversed.



FIG. 30. Panels No. 46 and 47, *vriśchikarechita* and *vriśchika*, *karāṇas* 46 and 47, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

Sculptured panel number 41 (Fig. 27) represents *daṇḍakarechita*, *karāṇa* 41 of the text. Both the panels show the hand and the foot thrown in *daṇḍa* form and are correct. The text, *vikshiptam hastapādādam tu samantād yatra daṇḍavat rechyate taddhi karāṇam jñeyam daṇḍakarechitam*, is well preserved. This *karāṇa* is to suggest an overbearing attitude—*uddhata Vishaye chāsya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 42 (Fig. 28) is *vriśchika kuṭṭita*, *karāṇa* 42 of the text. The leg is, no doubt, in *vriśchika* in both the panels, but the hands over the shoulders in *alapallava* at Chidambaram are nearer the text, *vriśchikam charaṇam kṛitvā dvāvāpyatha nikuṭṭitau vidhātavyau karau* explained by Abhinavagupta, *dvāvāpi hastau svabāhuśirasyalapallavau nikuṭṭitau paryāyeṇa vidadhyāt*. The hands are shown a little lower down against the chest in the Tañjāvūr panel. This panel is to convey wonder and a desire to move about in the sky—*etachcha vismayākāśagamanechchhādipradhāne vākyārthe vishaye prayujyate*.

Sculptured panel number 43 (Fig. 28) is *kaṭi-bhrānta*, *karāṇa* 43 of the text. The Chidambaram panel shows the legs differently from the text but at Tañjāvūr, though the text is followed, it is the reversed leg which is shown in *śūchī*. The *kaṭirechita* is also clear here. Probably, the *kaṭirechita* is echoed in *kararechita* also; rather it is *kararechita* which is in consonance with *kaṭirechita*. Abhinavagupta, in his commentary, says that the hands, which are optional, may be in consonance with the *kaṭirechita*—*bhramarikayā cha chāryā karayoścha prayogavaśatvena kaṭibhramaṇakāle tayoṛ api vyāvartana-parivartanakarāṇam*. This *karāṇa* is for pure *nṛitta*, where *tāla* is supreme.



FIG. 31. Panels No. 48 and 49, *vyamsita* and *pārśvanikuṭṭaka*, *karāṇas* 48 and 49, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

Sculptured panel 44 (Fig. 29) corresponds to *latāvriśchika*, *karāṇa* 44 of the text. Both the panels agree. The right leg is lifted up in *vriśchika*. The left leg rests on the ground and the left hand is thrown lightly in *latā* fashion, only instead of its being downward, the hand is a little raised. This *karāṇa* is to represent descent from the sky—*ākāśād avapatane'sya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 45 (Fig. 29) is *chhinna*, *karāṇa* 45 of the text. The text, *alapadmaḥ kaṭideśe chhinnā paryāyaśaḥ kaṭi vaiśākhaśthānakeha tachchhinnam karāṇam bhavet*, is clearly followed in both the panels at Tañjāvūr and at Chidambaram. At Tañjāvūr, the right hand in *alapadma* is on *kaṭi*, while at Chidambaram, it is the left hand. This is easily explained, as it is optional. It may be any hand shown thus. The *vaiśākhaśthāna* is clear in both. This *karāṇa* is to depict wiping of wounded limbs and breaking palm trees like Kṛishṇa—*aṅga pratisaraṇatālabhañjanādivishaye*.

Sculptured panel number 46 (Fig. 30) is *vriśchikarechita*, *karāṇa* 46 of the text. Both the panels are alike. It is the moment after the hands in *svastika* are separated and thrown out in *rechita* that is chosen for depiction, as this is fully illustrative of speed in aerial movement. The leg is raised in *vriśchika*, answering the text, *vriśchikam charaṇam kṛitvā*, for the foot and for the hands *svastikau cha karāvubhau rechitau viprakīrṇau cha karau*. This *karāṇa* illustrates movement in the sky—*etad ākāśayānake prayojyam*.

Sculptured panel number 47 (Fig. 30) is *vriśchika*, corresponding to *karāṇa* 47 of the text. Here



FIG. 32. Panels No. 50 and 51, *lalāṭatilaka* and *krāntaka*, *karana*s 50 and 51, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 33. Panels No. 52, 53 and 54, *kuñchita*, *chakramaṇḍala*, *uromaṇḍala*, *karana*s 52, 53 and 54, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 34. Panels No. 55 and 56, *ākshipta* and *talavilasita*, *karana*s 55 and 56, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

also, both the panels agree, but there is more life and movement in the Tañjāvūr panel. While the right leg is raised in *vṛiśchika* quite naturally, the buttocks are also a little elevated as in *vṛiśchika* attitude. The hands are held over the shoulders. The exposition in the text, *bāhuśīrshāñchitau hastau*, and *dūrasannataprishṭham cha*, can be clearly seen in the carving. This *karana* is used to connote aerial travel and the celestial elephant Airāvaṇa—*asyā-kāśagatau cha airāvaṇādivishaye prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel 48 (Fig. 31) is *vyamsita*, *karana* 48 of the text. In the two panels, the *ālīḍha* position of the legs is very clearly answered, but apart from this, at Tañjāvūr, the hands are separated out in *rechita*, the right one upward but the left one proceeding from the chest so as to point downwards, as the text demands. The line, *karau vakshasi rechitau ūrdhvādhoviprakīrṇau cha*, is clearly portrayed here. As the earlier movement is chosen at Chidambaram, both the hands are against the chest. It follows the text, *karau vakshasi rechitau*. This *karana* shows movement in a flurry—*etachcha vibhramādi-parikramavishayam*.

Sculptured panel number 49 (Fig. 31) corresponds to *pārśvanikuṭṭaka*, *karana* 49 of the text. The *hastavastika* and *nikuṭṭita* of the foot in the Tañjāvūr panel are more correctly portrayed here than at Chidambaram and follow the text, *hastau tu svastikau pārśve tathā pado nikuṭṭitau*. This *karana* is to suggest announcement or concealing — *prakāśanasamvaraṇābhyaśapradhāne vākyārthe chāsya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 50 (Fig. 32) is *lalāṭatilaka*, *karana* 50 of the text. Though both follow the text, this *karana* is clearer at Tañjāvūr, where the text is fully followed and the foot actually rubs the forehead—*vṛiśchikam charaṇam kṛtvā pādasyāṅgushṭhakena tu lalāṭatilakam kuryāllalāṭatilakam tu tat*. As the hands are optional, they are different in the two panels. This *karana* conveys the idea of Vidyādhara on the move—*etatkaranaṁ vidyādharaḡativishaye prayujyate*.

Sculptured panel number 51 (Fig. 32) is *krāntaka*, *karana* 51 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, the leg is bent back and drawn forward, with hands stretched and drawn in. The left hand is in *khaṭakāmukha*, as required in the text, explained by Abhinavagupta in his commentary: *hastau vichālya vyāvartitakaraneṇa dehakshetrān-nishkrāntaḥ punaḥ parivartitakaraneṇākshiptaḥ sa vakshasi khaṭakāmukhaḥ*. In the Chidambaram

panel, the leg is stretched much more to suggest motion. This *karāṇa* is used to indicate haughty striding around—*uddhataparikrame'sya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 52 (Fig. 33) represents *kuñchita*, *karāṇa* 52 of the text. The sculpture from Tañjāvūr, with both the right leg and hand bent, and left hand on the waist in *alapallava*, is correct and close to the text. At Chidambaram, it is not so. Abhinavagupta describes this as the *tāṇḍava* of Śiva in infinite joy — *tadetannirbharānandapūrṇadevasyābhinayaviśhaye prayoktavyam*. The text, *ādyah pādo nataḥ kāryas savyahastaścha kuñchitaḥ uttāno vāmapārśvasthas tat kuñchitam*, is clearly seen in the movement of the leg, bent and in action, the right hand similarly disposed, and the left in *alapallava*, to follow the commentary *uttānālapallavarūpo vāmapārśve vidheyah*. The bend of the torso suggests great movement. The face of Śiva also beams with joy, as the *karāṇa* itself suggests Śiva's joy.

Sculptured panel number 53 (Fig. 33) is *chakramaṇḍala*, *karāṇa* 53 of the text. The Tañjāvūr panel is nearer the text, as the hands sway forcefully, while the free feet stride heavily, *uddhataparikramaparishkaraṇādīviśhaye*, as Abhinavagupta would have it in the commentary. The directions, *pralambitābhyam bāhubhyām* and *gātrenānatenā cha*, are very clear in the sculpture. The Chidambaram panel, however, is misleading. This *karāṇa* also, like *krāntaka*, indicates haughty striding around.

Sculptured panel number 54 (Fig. 33) is *uromaṇḍala*, *karāṇa* 54 of the text. The sculpture from Tañjāvūr is very clear in depicting the description in the text. The legs are taken apart from *svastika* and the hands in *alapallava* are vigorously twirled, closely following *udveshṭito bhaved eko dvitīyaśchāpavesṭitaḥ bhramitāvurasas sthāne hyuromaṇḍalināu smritau*. The panel in Chidambaram also, no doubt, follows the text, but is not as forceful as the former.

Sculptured panel number 55 (Fig. 34) is *ākshipta*, *karāṇa* 55 of the text. Again here, the Tañjāvūr panel is nearer the text. The definition, *ākshiptam hastapādān cha kriyate yatra vegataḥ*, is clearly seen in the Tañjāvūr panel, while in the Chidambaram panel, the almost seated posture does not portray that much of action. The line of the commentary, *ākshiptayā pādachāryā pārśvasya kiñchinmananena hastasya chaturaśrasya kṣaṭakāmukhyā kshepaḥ*, is clearly portrayed in



FIG. 35. Panels No. 56 and 57, *talavilasita*, and *argala*, *karāṇas* 56 and 57, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr



FIG. 36. Panel No. 58, *vikshipta*, *karāṇa* 58, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 37. Panels No. 59, 60 and 61, *āvarta*, *dolapāda* and *vivṛitta*, *karāṇas* 59, 60 and 61, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

the Tañjāvūr panel depicting *ākshipta*. This *karāṇa* has a reference to the gait of the jestor—*vidushakagativishayam etat*.

Sculptured panel number 56 (Fig. 34) is *talavilasita*, *karāṇa* 56 of the text. The Tañjāvūr panel follows the text. The right foot has the sole and toe raised for patting, and the palms of the hands in *patāka*, raised up to meet somewhere above the head, as Abhinavagupta describes them: *ūrdhvāṅgulitalaḥ pādau* of the text and *patākau hastau parasparopasamśliṣṭāvīti pādatalasya hastatalasya cha vikṣipte deśe ākāśe lasitam śleṣhaṇam yatra talavilasitam* of the commentary are clearly answered. The Chidambaram panel, however, does not follow the text so far as the leg is concerned. This *karāṇa* is used in the case of the *sūtradhāra* and some others—*sūtradhārādivishaye*.

Sculptured panel number 57 (Fig. 35) represents *argala*, *karāṇa* 57 of the text: *prishṭhataḥ prasṛitaḥ pādo dvau tālāvardhameva cha tasyaiva chānugo hastau puratastvargalam tu tat* is completely answered here. As the foot is stretched back and the arms stretched forward to answer the text, the movement is forceful, as in the case of warriors like Aṅgada—*parikrame chaitad aṅgadaprabhritinām bhavati*, as Abhinavagupta defines it. The Chidambaram panel, however, is more acrobatic and far from the text.

Sculptured panel number 58 (Fig. 36) is *vikshipta*, *karāṇa* 58 of the text. In this case, the Chidambaram panel is nearer the text, as it follows the direction, *ekamārgagatam hastapādām vikshiptam*. In the Tañjāvūr panel, both the hands are in *vikshipta*, the legs are in a position to be stretched, but not yet. This *karāṇa*, like *krāntaka* and *chakramaṇḍala*, signifies a haughty demeanour and gait—*idam uddhatagatiparikrama-sūchanādivishayam*.

Sculptured panel number 59 (Fig. 37) represents *āvarta*, *karāṇa* 59 of the text. The position of the legs tallies in both the panels and follows the text. The hands are optional and differ. The *karāṇa* indicates the approach of the heroine towards the hero—*nāyakopasarpaṇe*.

Sculptured panel number 60 (Fig. 37) represents *dolāpāda*, *karāṇa* 60 of the text. As the hands are optional, the main thing is the swaying of the leg—*kuñchitam pādām utkshipya pārśvātpārśvam tu dolayet*. This is clearly depicted in the Tañjāvūr panel, which follows the text better. The hands



FIG. 38. Panels No. 62 and 63, *vinivṛtta* and *pārśvavrānta*, *karāṇas* 62 and 63, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brīhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr



FIG. 39. Panels No. 63 and 64, *pārśvavrānta* and *nistambhita*, *karāṇas* 63 and 64, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brīhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr



FIG. 40. Panels No. 65 and 66, *vidyudbhṛānta* and *atikrānta*, *karāṇas* 65 and 66, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brīhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr



FIG. 41. Panel No. 67, vivartitaka, karaṇa 67, Chola, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 42. Panel No. 68, gajakṛititaka, karaṇa 68, Chola, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 43. Panel No. 69, talasamsphoṭita, karaṇa 69, Chola, 11th century A.D., Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

being optional, differ in both the panels. The commentary, *dolāhastāveva prayogavaśagau*, is answered at Tañjāvūr as both the hands are *dolāhastā*, while only one hand is in *dolā* in Chidambaram. This panel, however, is also full of action.

Sculptured panel number 61 (Fig. 37) depicts *vivṛitta*, *karaṇa* 61 of the text. At Tañjāvūr, the sculpture follows the text better. In the legs, twist of the torso, *rechita* of the hands in *alapallava*, the hemistich, *ākshiptam hastapādam cha trikam chaiva vivartayet*, is very clearly seen represented. In the Chidambaram panel the hands are in *rechita*, the legs are somewhat confusing. The commentary prescribes *hamsapaksha*, instead of *alapallava*—*tad rechitau cha hamsapakshau drutabhramau hastāviti trikavivartanayogāt vivṛitam*. Here the twist and the back view suggest better the movement of the hip. This *karaṇa* is for portraying haughty and over-bearing march—*asyoddhatagatiparikrame prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 62 (Fig. 38) is *vinivṛitta*, *karaṇa* 62 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, the position of the leg and the twist of the torso are according to the text. The hands are not fully in *rechita* and are in *samdamsā*, instead of *hamsapaksha*. *Sūchividdham vidhāyātha trikam tu vinivartayet karau cha rechitau kāryau* is very clear. In the Chidambaram panel, however, the hands are confusing, though probably the movement of *rechita*, as shown here, is quite possible. The use of this *karaṇa* is as for the previous one.

Sculptured panel number 63 (Fig. 38) is *pārśvakrānta*, *karaṇa* 63 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, following the text, the foot is in *bhujāṅgāñchita* and raised. The hands are optional. In the Chidambaram panel, the hands and feet are different. This *karaṇa* is mainly to suggest the dominant mood of terror, like that of Bhīmasena—*etachcha raudrapradhāne bhīmasenādeḥ parikrame*.

Sculptured panel number 64 (Fig. 39) represents *nistambhita*, *karaṇa* 64 of the text. Here the text, *prishṭhataḥ kuñchitaḥ pādo vakshaśchaiva samunnatam tilake cha karas sthāpyaḥ*, is correctly followed, as the leg is bent back, chest raised, and the hand touching the forehead. The Chidambaram panel shows the leg in *ūrdhva-jānu*, almost approaching Abhinavagupta's *pārśvabhāge kuñchitaḥ*. Another version of leg, noticed by Abhinavagupta, is *vṛiśchika*—*vṛiśchi-*



FIG. 44. Panels No. 70 and 71, garudaplutaka and gaṇḍasūchi, karaṇas 70 and 71, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 45. Panels No. 72 and 73, parivṛtta and pārśvajānu, karaṇas 72 and 73, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 46. Panels No. 74 and 75, gridhrāvalinaka and sannata, karaṇas 74 and 75, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

ko'tra pāda ityeke. This is a special pose to simulate and suggest Śiva—*maheśvarābhinayavishayam*.

Sculptured panel number 65 (Fig. 40) is *vidyudbhrānta*, *karaṇa* 65 of the text. The Tañjāvūr panel answers to the text and commentary better, as the leg is bent and raised and twirls around, touching the head, while it is straight up in the Chidambaram panel. The hands are also appropriately in *maṇḍala* fashion here, and in *rechita* and *dolā* in Chidambaram. *Prishṭhato valitam pādām śiroghṛishṭam prasārayet sarvato maṇḍalāviddham* is clearly seen in the figure in Tañjāvūr. This text as well as *prishṭhata ūrumūladeśāt prabhṛiti valitam chakravadbhrāmitam*, as explained by Abhinavagupta, are both answered. This *karaṇa* depicts the sudden forceful jump perturbed by a flash of lightning—*vidyuta udbhramaṇād vidyudbhrāntam uddhatagati-parikramādivishayam*.

Sculptured panel number 66 (Fig. 40) is *atikrānta*, *karaṇa* 66 of the text. The Tañjāvūr panel follows the text closely, as the powerful strides here, as in *krāntaka karaṇa* 51 follow *atikrānta-chārī*. The optional hands are also suggestive of overbearing might. The Chidambaram panel does not bring this out, as it does not fully follow the text. The *karaṇa* is indicative of might.

Sculptured panel number 67 (Fig. 41) is *vivartitaka*, *karaṇa* 67 of the text. Here the *ākshiptapāda* is suggested by the *svastika*, whence it is stretched out. One of the hands is *rechita*, while another is *ākshipta*, along with the leg in motion. The twist of the torso is also evident. The text, *ākshiptam hastapādam cha trikam chaiva vivartitam dvitīyo rechito hastaḥ*, is quite clearly seen here. The Chidambaram panel, however, is quite different from the text.

Sculptured panel number 68 (Fig. 42) represents *gajakrīḍitaka*, *karaṇa* 68 of the text. Both the panels follow the text, but in the Chidambaram panel, the right leg in *dolā pāda* is very effective, while at Tañjāvūr, it is not, because of the twist in the waist, which ruins it. *Karṇe'ñchitaḥ karo vāmo lālāhastāścha dakṣiṇaḥ*, as the text would have the hands, is fully answered in both the panels. *Dolāpādestathā chaiva* is clearer at Chidambaram. True to its name, this *karaṇa* suggests the sport of an elephant—*prayogaśchāsya nāmochita eva*.

Sculptured panel number 69 (Fig. 43) is *talasamphoṭita*, *karaṇa* 69 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr



FIG. 47. Panel No. 76, sūchī, karaṇa 76, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 49. Panels No. 79 and 80, apakrānta and mayūralalita, karaṇas 79 and 80, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.



FIG. 48. Panels No. 77 and 78, ardhasūchī and sūchīviddha, karaṇas 77 and 78, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

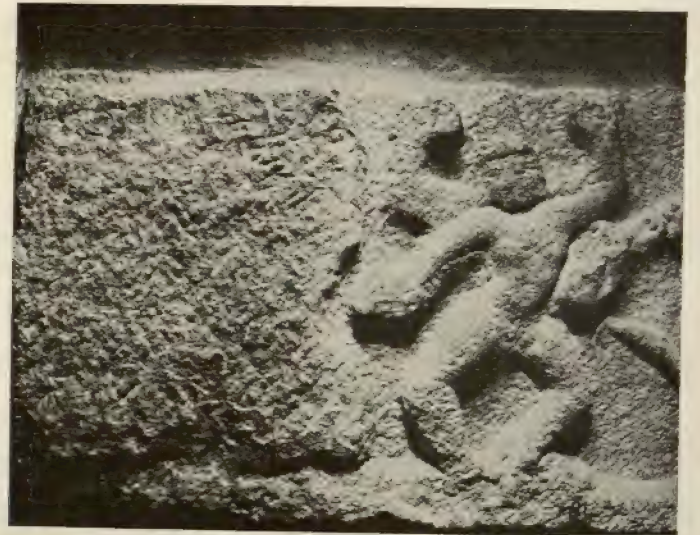


FIG. 50. Panel No. 81, sarpita, karaṇa 81, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

panel, the final position of the legs, after a jump, is indicated, and the hands are in the act of clapping, *talasamsphoṭitau hastau*, which is very important, as the *karaṇa* is for clapping and drawing attention. *Drutam utkshipya charaṇam purastād atha pātayet* is also clear here. In the Chidambaram panel, which also follows the text, the clapping is obvious. The legs are gracefully bent, as they are shown still in motion.

Sculptured panel number 70 (Fig. 44) is *garuḍaplutaka*, *karaṇa* 70 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, there is a correct rendering of the text. Both hands are either *latā* or *rechita*, as they go up and down like wings, and cannot be one *latā* and another *rechita*, as Abhinavagupta would have it. The text, *prishṭhaprasāritāḥ pādau*, is

explained by Abhinavagupta, *vṛścikavachcharaṇam*. Both *latārechitakau karau* and *samunnatam śiraśchaiva* are clearly indicated in the raised head and the movements of the hands. The Chidambaram panel is also correct, but not so effective. As the name of the *karaṇa* indicates, its use is to suggest the flight of a bird—*prayogo'sya nāmochita eva*.

Sculptured panel number 71 (Fig. 44) is *gaṇḍasūchī*, *karaṇa* 71 of the text. The text, *sūchīpādo natam pārśvam eko vakshasthitaḥ karaḥ dvitīyaśchāñchito gaṇḍe*, is very clearly indicated in the Tañjāvūr panel, which closely follows the text by indicating *sūchīpāda*, one hand in *alapallava* on chest and another in *sūchī* near the cheek, with the head and torso a little bent. The Chidambaram panel is not as clear as this. This *karaṇa* indicates

the beautifying of the cheek in personal adornment—*gaṇḍasamśrayapradhānabhūṣaṇābhī-nayavishayo'sya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 72 (Fig. 45) represents *parivṛtta*, *karāṇa* 72 of the text. The panel from Tañjāvūr gives a back view, but it follows the text regarding the description. The hands show upward movement, the leg a twist of the *sūchīpāda*, and there is a circular movement of the hip. The back view here is to emphasise the text on the gyration of the hip, *parivṛtta trika*, and is significant. The Chidambaram panel lacks this and is not so effective.

Sculptured panel number 73 (Fig. 45) is *pār-śvajānu*, *karāṇa* 73 of Bharata's text. The Tañjāvūr panel follows the text with *muṣṭīhastā* on chest, a leg bent and nearly resting on the other thigh, but not quite. *Ūrupriṣṭhe stito'paraḥ* is peculiarly answered in the Chidambaram panel, where it has strayed a little from the text in regard to other directions. This is a pose of a warrior as fighting, *yuddhaniyuddhavishayam etat*.

Sculptured panel number 74 (Fig. 46) represents *grīdhṛāvalīnaka*, *karāṇa* 74 of the text. The simple direction in the text, *prīṣṭhaprasāritaḥ pādau* and *prasāritau bāhu*, are easily followed in both the panels. The knee is a little bent, *kiñchidañchitajānukaḥ*, and a leg thrust back, while the hands are thrown up to show the movement of wings, as this *karāṇa* is intended to represent the flight of birds—*pakṣhinirū-ṣaṇādau grīdhṛāvalīnakam*.

Sculptured panel number 75 (Fig. 46) is *san-nata*, *karāṇa* 75 of the text. The crossing of hands and legs is more distinct in the Tañjāvūr panel. Here the peculiar *svastika* of the feet is different from the crossing of the legs in *svastika karāṇa*. At Chidambaram, however, *karāṇas* 75 and 15 are both alike. After the jump the crossing of the legs at the shanks (*janghā*) determines the pose, as represented here in *karāṇa* 75 of Tañjāvūr. It conveys the idea of the meek approach of a low-born—*etat adhamaprakīrtanād upasarpaṇādivishaye*.

Panel number 76 is *sūchī*, *karāṇa* 76 (Fig. 47) of the text. Though both the panels follow the text, the Chidambaram panel shows both the legs in *sūchī* to distinguish it from *ardhasūchī*, where the right leg is in *sūchī*. The hands being optional, differ in the panels. One of the four hands is purposely in *sūchī* at Tañjāvūr to suggest the name of the *karāṇa*.

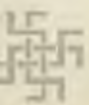
Sculptured panel number 77 (Fig. 48) represents *ardhasūchī*, *karāṇa* 77 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, special care has been taken to show *alapadma* of hand near the head and the right leg in *sūchī*. Thus it follows the text, *alapadmas śirohastas sūchīpādaścha dakṣiṇaḥ*. In the panel at Chidambaram also, it is similarly portrayed.

Sculptured panel number 78 (Fig. 49) is *sūchī-viddha*, *karāṇa* 78 of the text. Both the panels follow the text, though at Tañjāvūr, the straight left leg detracts from the elegance of the pose. The panel at Chidambaram looks much better. However, the text, *pādasūchyā yadā pādo dvitī-yastu pravidyate kaṭivakshasthītau hastau*, relating to one foot in *sūchī*, placed against the other, while the hands rest, one on the waist, and the other on the chest, are clearly followed. This *karāṇa* denotes deep thought and reflection, *chintāvishaye'sya prayogaḥ*.

Sculptured panel number 79 is *apakrānta*, *karāṇa* 79 of the text. In the Tañjāvūr panel, the thighs are crossed, *kṛitvoruvalitam*, and suggest long strides *pādam apakrāntakramam nyaset*, and as the hands are optional, are shown thrown up. It may be noted that wherever the hands are optional, this position is preferred. In the Chidambaram panel, the hands are different, as they are declared optional, but even otherwise this panel differs.

Sculptured panel number 80 (Fig. 49) is *mayūralalita*, *karāṇa* 80 of the text. Both the panels follow the text. *Vṛīṣchikam charaṇam kṛitvā rechitau cha tathā karau* is clearly seen indicated in the position of the right leg bent and raised backward in *vṛīṣchika*, and the hands thrown up in *rechita*. The movement of the *kaṭi* or the hip is even clearer in Chidambaram following the text, *tathā trikam vivṛittam*. This *karāṇa* simulates the joyous dance of the peacock—*mayūranṛit-tānukāri mayūralalitam*.

Sculptured panel 81 (Fig. 50) represents *sarpita*, *karāṇa* 81 of Bharata. The text is clearly followed by the head tossed from one side to another, towards which the hand moves in *rechita*, while the leg, with the toes and sole raised and bent to pat on the ground, is in *añchita*. The head answers, *śiraścha parivāhitam*, the legs, *añchitāpasṛitau pādau*, and the hands, though not completely, answer, no doubt, *rechitau cha tathā hastau*. The *karāṇa* implies by the pat of the feet an intoxicated gait—*pādakṛitamado-pasarpaṇa*.



KARANAS PRESENTED BY VISHNU AS KRISHNA

Along with Śiva and Brahmā, Viṣṇu is also one of the three great masters that created the science of dance. In fact, the story of the origin of the styles in dance—*vṛttis*, is narrated by Bharata in Chapter 22. When the *asuras* Madhu and Kaiṭabha challenged Viṣṇu, as he was lying on the serpent couch on the vast ocean after the deluge, they started a wild verbal attack, which Brahmā immediately styled, *bhāratī vṛtti*, verbal style, where speech predominates. Viṣṇu moved along to reach them, and greatly burdened the earth by his strides, and because of this *bhāra*, it was called *bhāratī vṛtti*. This is another and rather strained interpretation.

Through his bow, *śārṅga*, resounding and twanging with all its strength, *sattva*, the *sāttvatī vṛtti* or the effective grand style was born.

In his encounter with the demons, Viṣṇu moved gracefully, creating the charming *aṅgaḥāras* and tied up his *śikhā* or *keśa*, through which originated the *kaiśikī vṛtti* or the graceful style.

Finally, the great energy and excitement in the combat between Viṣṇu and the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, which gave rise to different forceful movements or *chārīs*, brought into being the *ārabhaṭī vṛtti* or the energetic style.

These styles were utilised for expression of sentiment; and following their creation by the exploits of Viṣṇu, the *rishis* fashioned different similar styles by taking the verbal *bhāratīvṛtti* from the *Rigveda*, *sātvatī*, or the grand, from the *Yajurveda*, the graceful *kaiśikī* from the *Sāmaveda* and the energetic *ārabhaṭī* from the *Atharvaveda*. They were great literary styles. As *nāṭya* closely follows the spoken word, in expressing it through gestures and movements, these latter are equally appropriate in expressing various moods, both soft and charming and fearful and heroic, with grace and vigour respectively.

In the temple of Śārṅgapāṇi, i.e., Viṣṇu with the *śārṅga* bow, in Kumbakonam, the

entrance *gopura* has a series of *karaṇas* in dance, represented almost as in the Naṭarāja Temple at Chidambaram or in the Bṛhadiśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr.

It may interest one to note how the idea of Viṣṇu, dancing for an exposition of the *karaṇas*, dance movements, has been handled by the sculptor who created this temple. Just as Śiva, as Naṭarāja, is the lord of classical dance, Kṛishṇa is the lord of folk dance. That is why Kṛishṇa, who is so fond of dance, and is styled *Navanītanāṭa*, *Kālīyaphaṇamāṇikyarañjitaśrīpadāmbuja*, was also the central figure of *rāsālilā* (Fig. 1), which is only an expression of *hallīsalāsyā*. *Daṇḍarāsa*, with small sticks to keep time, is often depicted in Gupta sculpture and painting, as at Deogarh and Bagh. In the Bagh cave, there is a beautiful representation of *daṇḍarāsa*, which is also a *hallīsalāsyā*, a dance in a ring. Lilāśuka, the author of *kṛishṇakaraṇāmṛita*, gives the most effective version of the *rāsālilā*, which is picturesquely described in the *Bhāgavata*. A Kṛishṇa between every pair of *gopīs*, *aṅganām aṅganām antare mādhave mādhave mādhave chāntareṇāṅganā ittham ākalpite maṇḍale madhyagas sañjagau veṇunā devakīnandanah*, is very clearly seen in several *rāsālilā* paintings and sculptures. Kṛishṇa reached the level of milkmaids by approaching them in their own simple language of folk dance. He could not expect the highest classical form in these unsophisticated maidens. But Kṛishṇa was not only an adept in folk dance, but he was also the master of classical dance, as he was, after all, the incarnation of Viṣṇu, one of the three creators of this great art.

It is with this idea in his mind that the form of Kṛishṇa has been chosen by the sculptor to delineate the *karaṇas* in the Śārṅgapāṇi temple. As the *gopura* itself is of the late Chōla period, it is purely an expression of the joy born of the appreciation of dance in all its forms, when the emperors patronised classical dance at its best; and the sculptors vied with one another in representing more and more the glory of this great art. This is almost a reminder of Viṣṇu, associated with dance, which was not in any way less important for the study of

this classical art, than the knowledge of Śiva's contribution towards it.

It was Nilakaṇṭha Dikshita who remarked that, though there were a number of poets to eulogise and describe the exploits, like the pilfering of butter in the homes of milkmaids, by the little boy, who was caught and tied to mortars and to posts in cowsheds, there were but few to sing the glory of the great God, who drank the deadly poison, as it rose out of the ocean, churned by the gods to obtain ambrosia, and almost stupefied the whole world, which he saved from annihilation by swallowing it. He is here almost answered by a reversal of the position. We know of enough representations of Śiva's dance in Chidambaram, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Dārāsuram, Taṇjāvūr, Tiruvālaṅgādu, Melakkaḍambūr, Madurai and other places, but the contribution to dance of Viṣṇu, not



FIG. 1. *Kṛṣṇa Veṇugopāla in a rāsamāṇḍala with a circle of musicians playing orchestra, his weapons śaṅkha and chakra repeated in a maṇḍala and the cows, cowherds and milkmaids in another maṇḍala encircling this. From the ceiling of maṇḍapa of Viṇāyāṇa temple, Hoysala, 12th century A.D., Belwādi, Mysore.*



FIG. 2. *Talapapushpapuṭa. The figure next to talapapushpapuṭa is probably chakramāṇḍala, karāṇa 53 (see p. 66) or even possibly argala, karāṇa 57 (see p. 67). Late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇḍī temple, Kumbakonam.*

so well eulogised, so disturbed this architect as to induce him to represent this beautiful series of *karāṇas*. Of course, it cannot be denied that this is a Vaiṣṇavite version of the Śaivaite series we know from the Bṛihadīśvara Temple.

The very first sculpture here (Fig. 2) shows the

talapapushpapuṭa, the first *karāṇa*, almost in the same manner as in the case of Śiva in the Bṛihadīśvara Temple. The *vanamālā* of Kṛṣṇa is shown extending over the shoulders.

Diksvastika, *karāṇa* 17, is presented here (Fig. 3) in the Sāraṅgaṇḍī Temple, even better than in



FIG. 4. Karanas in a row. The central one is *kaṭisama*, *karana* 19, the *karana* to its right is *bhramaraka*, *karana* 38 (see p. 67, 51) and the *karana* to the left is *lalāṭatilaka*, *karana* 50. Late Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., *Sāraṅgaṇṇī* temple, *Kumbakoṇam*.

← FIG. 3. *Diksvastika*, *karana* 17, late Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., *Sāraṅgaṇṇī* temple, *Kumbakoṇam*.

either the *Bṛihadīśvara* Temple panel or even the one at *Chidambaram*. The face looks sideways and the figure itself suggests the back with a little twirl which clearly indicates its turn towards the side, *diksvastika*. *Abhinavagupta's* explanation, *yat paśchātsvastikākhyam karaṇam uktam tadeva yadā pārśvayor agre chakārāt prishṭhe chaturdīnmukheshvatruṭitenāṅgena kriyate' ta evāṅgaśliṣṭa iti, tad diksvastikam iti*. In this, a noteworthy thing is the *vanamālā*, which is shown tossed violently in the dance on either side, hanging from the shoulder and through the hands. In all these carvings it is either the *vanamālā* that is prominent or the juvenile ornament *suvarṇavaikashaka*, so pronounced in the case of *Kṛishṇa* and *Bālasubrahmaṇya*.

Kaṭisama, *karana* 19, is clearly indicated here (Fig. 4) and nearly follows the text. While in the *Chidambaram* panel, the hands are on the navel and hip, as the text would require, *karau nābhikaṭisthitau*, the hands here are one on *kaṭi* and the other a little above the navel on the chest, which is only a slight deviation. The leg has been removed from the position of *pādasvastika* and answers the text, *svastikāpasritaḥ pādaḥ*, and even the body is a little swung towards the side, *pārśvam udvāhitam chaiva*, which brings it close to the *Bṛihadīśvara* temple panel also.

Ardhasvastika, *karana* 22, in its representation here, shows that it follows the reading *karihasta* in the text (Fig. 5). Though *Abhinavagupta* has noticed two readings, *karihasta* and *kaṭihasta*, the *Taṅjāvūr* panel, as well as that from *Chidambaram*, follows the text *kaṭihasta*, but the *Kumbakoṇam* panel follows the reading of *Abhinavagupta*, *karihasta*. In fact, this is the



FIG. 5. *Ardhasvastika*, *karana* 22, late Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., *Sāraṅgaṇṇī* temple, *Kumbakoṇam*.

one sculpture that follows the text as accepted by *Abhinavagupta* better than any other. *Svastikau charaṇau kṛtvā karihastam cha dakṣiṇam vakshasthāne tathā vāmam ardhasvastikam ādiśet*, is fully answered here, as the right hand is against the chest, the left in *karihasta*, and the legs is *svastika*. The *vanamālā* is here presented in a novel way by showing a row of flowers scattered on his shoulders. But this is not like the motif of two, three or five flowers on the shoulders which is a regular feature in late Chōḷa sculpture. This is something more than that. The flowers are larger and go a greater length to suggest the *vanamālā* garland.

Another panel here at *Kumbakoṇam* re-



FIG. 6. Ardhasvastika as the first figure and the second ūrdhvajānu, karaṇa No. 5, Late Chōla, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapaṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.



FIG. 8. Daṇḍapaksha, karaṇa 34, late Chōla, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapaṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.



FIG. 7. Bhujāṅgaśrī, karaṇa 24, late Chōla, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapaṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

presents the same *ardhasvastika* (karaṇa 22), and in this case also, the sculpture follows the text *karihasta*, and not *kaṭihasta*. Abhinavagupta knows the variant *kaṭihasta*, *kaṭihastam iti kechit paṭhanti*, which is followed in sculpture at Chidaṁbaram and Tañjāvūr, the *vanamālā* sways as Kṛishṇa dances (Fig. 6).

It is interesting that in the same series, there is another (Fig. 18) representing *ardhasvastika*, karaṇa 22, where the text, *kaṭihastam cha dakṣiṇam*, is followed and comes very close to the Chidaṁbaram panel. The *vanamālā* is very prominently shown on the shoulder reaching up to the elbow. It is interesting that both the variant readings are sculpturally represented in Kumbakoṇam.

Bhujāṅgaśrī, karaṇa 24, is presented here (Fig. 7) with the right leg lifted up as the hip gyrates, as is required in the text, and as the hands are not specifically mentioned in the text, they are not necessarily after either the Tañjāvūr or the Chidaṁbaram panel. This is, however, an excellent rendering of the text, *kuñchitam pādam utkṣipya*. It is very pleasing. The *vanamālā* is prominently shown on the shoulder. *Dolahasta*, prescribed by the commentary of Abhinavagupta, during the course of action in this karaṇa, is, however, shown only at Chidaṁbaram, but this panel, from Kumbakoṇam, comes nearer the representation at Tañjāvūr, both regarding the leg and the hands.

Nikuñchita, karaṇa 26, here (Fig. 14) very closely follows the text, *vṛiśchikam charaṇam kṛtvā karam pārśve nikuñchayet nāsāgre dakṣiṇam chaiva jñeyam tat tu nikuñchitam*, as the right leg is raised in *vṛiśchika* and the right hand on the top of the nose, while the left is bent to the chest. While in the Tañjāvūr panel, this karaṇa, though correctly represented, has yet the leg in the process of raising to the full pose, *vṛiśchika*, and the right hand still approaching the nose, here in this panel at Kumbakoṇam, the sculptor has very clearly brought out the spirit of the text. In the Chidaṁbaram panel, however, though the *vṛiśchika* leg is very appropriate, the right hand is stretched out in *karihasta*, and thus somewhat strays from the text.

Daṇḍapaksha (karaṇa 34) is represented in a panel at Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 8) with the right leg in *ūrdhvajānu* and the right hand in *latāhasta*



FIG. 9. Daṇḍarechita, karaṇa 41, late Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇḍī temple, Kumbakoṇam.



FIG. 10. Vṛiśchikarechita, karaṇa 46, late Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇḍī temple, Kumbakoṇam.



FIG. 11. Vṛiśchika, karaṇa 47, late Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇḍī temple, Kumbakoṇam.

over it, as the text would require it—*ūrdhvajānum vidhāyātha tasyopari latām nyaset daṇḍapaksham tu tat proktam*. The sculpture from Tañjāvūr represents the *latāhasta* resting on the *ūrdhvajānu* leg, just as in this, though at Chidambaram the hand is very much raised, almost in *rechita*. The *vanamālā* extends over Kṛishṇa's shoulders.

Bhramaraka, karaṇa 38, is very vigorously presented here (Fig. 4). While very clearly in the Chidambaram panel and also in the Tañjāvūr panel, this *karaṇa* is made very effective by the twist in the body, almost creating a back view near the hip, it is the front view that is presented here in the Kumbakoṇam panel, though the gyration of the hip is also indicated, the legs in *svastika* and the hands in *udveshṭita*. Kṛishṇa wears the *vanamālā* and the usual juvenile ornaments associated with him. The *vanamālā* is again very expressive but almost as if to indicate the importance of Śiva's association with dance and the attendance of the Śiva-gaṇas on him during his dance, the musical figures in accompaniment here are also Śiva-gaṇas, keeping time as Kṛishṇa dances.

Daṇḍarechita, karaṇa 41, clearly follows the text by the outstretched hands and the drawn out leg, *vikshiptam hastapādān samantād yatra daṇḍavat*, and the gyratory movement through the hip, *rechyate*, as given in the text, which together make up the name *rechyate taddhi karaṇam jñeyam daṇḍakarechitam*. This is, however, differently presented at both Chidambaram and Tañjāvūr, the figure being a standing one. In all the cases, the text is clearly followed, but while only the one leg is drawn out here in the panel at Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 9), both the legs are stretched at Chidambaram and Tañjāvūr.

The text for *vṛiśchikarechita*, karaṇa 46, which describes the leg shot up in *vṛiśchika*, and the hands spread out in *rechita* form, is answered in the representation at Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 10), but it also follows equally well the *karaṇa mayūralalita*, where almost a similar position is prescribed for it. But in *mayūralalita*, it is the gyratory movement of the torso and the hip, which add charm to it, and give it a distinctiveness. In fact there is close similarity in the representation of this *karaṇa* in the panel at Chidambaram, as well as at Tañjāvūr. The gyration of the hip, in the case of *mayūralalita*, suggests the peacock dancing, while the forceful movement in *vṛiśchikarechita* suggests aerial movement, which may be both of a bird or a



FIG. 12. *Vṛiśchika*, *karāṇa* 47, late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., *Sāraṅgaṇī* temple, Kumbakoṇam.

in the hands approaching the shoulder, suggesting the first position, according to the text *vṛiśchikam charaṇam kṛtvā svastikau cha karāvubhau*, in the definition of *vṛiśchika*. There is probably a repetition of *vṛiśchikarechita*, this time presented in almost seated form, though the right leg is shot up and the hands separated out in *rechita*. It could also be *mayūralalita*.

Another (Fig. 12) *karāṇa* probably repeats *vṛiśchika* (*karāṇa* 47) in one of the movements of action of the hands springing up to move above the shoulders, while the leg is *prishthāñchita*, as the text would have it. The hands are moving up to be in position over the shoulders, *bāhuśīrshāñchitau hastau*. The waist is bent, as required in the text, *dūrasannataprishtham*. There is similarly another panel representing another moment of the same *karāṇa*.



FIG. 13. *Lalāṭatilaka*, *karāṇa* 50, late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., *Sāraṅgaṇī* temple, Kumbakoṇam.
In this case, it is Śiva who is given the highest place in this difficult mode by which he defeated Kālī in a dance contest. This is interesting in the *Sāraṅgaṇī* temple, Kumbakoṇam.

celestial. The text, *vṛiśchikam charaṇam kṛtvā rechitau cha tathā karau tathā trikam vivṛittam*, defining *mayūralalita*, probably applies here with greater force, as there is movement in the torso.

Vṛiśchika, *karāṇa* 47, is portrayed here (Fig. 11) at Kumbakoṇam to follow clearly one moment of action, as described in the commentary of Abhinavagupta.

According to the text for *vṛiśchikarechita*, the leg should be in *vṛiśchika*, and the hands, first in *svastika*, to be separated out in *rechita*. This earlier position of the hands in *svastika*, before they are released to be in *rechita*, as beautifully depicted here, can almost be seen

Lalāṭatilaka, *karāṇa* 50, is presented here (Fig. 4) almost as in the panel from Chidambaram. The left hand touches the head and the right hand is nearer the chest. The leg, however, does not rub the forehead as the text would require. In fact, the text of Bharata does not prescribe any definite pose for the hands, though the upraised *vṛiśchika* leg is expected to rub the forehead. Here, the leg is lifted up and has not yet reached the forehead.

The Kumbakoṇam series presents another (Fig. 23) perfect *lalāṭatilaka*, *karāṇa* 50. In this, the hands are in *abhaya* or *patāka*, as the hands do not come in the picture at all and would be according to the option of the sculptor. The



FIG. 15. The third one in the frieze is uromaṇḍala, karaṇa 54. The Central one is nikuñchita, karaṇa 26, already referred to (see p. 63) and the first one sarpita, karaṇa 18 (see p. 68). Late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

← FIG. 14. Lalāṭatilaka by Kṛishṇa, karaṇa 50, late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

main indication in this *karaṇa* is the rubbing of the forehead by the leg—*pādasyāṅguṣṭhakena tu lalāṭe tilakam kuryāt*. In this it comes very close to the Tañjāvūr panel.

Lalāṭatilaka, karaṇa 50, in almost seated position, is beautifully presented in Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 14). One hand on the hip and the other on the chest, with the leg shot up, brings it nearer the Chidambaram panel from *lalāṭatilaka*. It is very close, however, to a sculpture from Chidambaram representing karaṇa 106 *nāgāpasarpita*, though the sculpture does not follow the text for *nāgāpasarpita*, which, if it did, should be an entirely different pose.

Lalāṭatilaka is repeated again (Fig. 13), this time in a grand form, and the figure in this case is Śiva himself, multiarmed. With eighteen arms he dances with a leg uplifted, the main left hand raised up and the right around the leg and in *abhaya*. The rest of the hands have different attributes. A very suggestive thing is that one of the hands is in *sūchī*, one in *vismaya*, a third in *saṁdamśa*, which is the same as *chinmudrā* for *jñāna* teaching. *Tarjanī*, same as *sūchī* suggests death, *abhaya* protection and *saṁdamśa* the birth of knowledge which indicates creation, while the hand in wonder, *vismaya*, suggests the wonder of *moksha*, after an assurance of liberation is given in the uplifted hand in *karihasta* or *dola* pointing to his foot as the refuge. There are Gaṇas on either side to keep time. The clouds behind and the adoring celestials beyond them suggest the dance of Śiva as in *Chidākāśa*, in ether. The bringing in of Śiva here is to associate *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* with the Lord of dancers,

Naṭarāja, who, after all, is the greatest glory of dance, though Brahmā and Viṣṇu, no doubt, share with Śiva the honour of creating and propagating this great art which is a feast for the eye.

Very close to the first *karaṇa*, *talapushpapuṭa*, there is presented what is probably *chakra-maṇḍala*, karaṇa 53 as it nearly answers the text, *pralambitābhyām bāhubhyām yad gātreṇānatena cha abhyantarāpaviddhas syāt tajjñeyam chakramaṇḍalam*. This requires the legs to be stretched, the body bent and curled inwards (Fig. 2). While in the Bṛhadiśvara temple panel, there is a powerful stride, with swaying hands and foot stamped



FIG. 16. Vidyudbhṛānta, karaṇa 65, Late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam



FIG. 17. Atikrānta, karana 66, Late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.



FIG. 19. Sūchividdha, karana 78, late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.



FIG. 18. Another representation of Ardhasvastika, karana 22 (see p. 63), and Mayūralalita, karana 80 (see p. 64). Late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

FIG. 20. One represents argala, karana 57 (see p. 67, 69) and the other apakrānta karana 79 (see p. 68), late Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgaṇṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

heavily on the ground, as would be required by the comment of Abhinavagupta in his commentary, *uddhataparākrama*, the text and the name of the *karana* itself, and to a certain extent, even the misleading Chidambaram panel, suggest a complete twist of the body to create a *maṇḍala*. In the case of this, as well as in the case of *argala* (*karana* 57), the warrior's stride is shown at Tañjāvūr, while at Chidambaram, the acrobatic somersault, so popular with children and monkeys, is indicated in the sculpture.

A *karana* from Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 15) represents what appears to be *uromaṇḍala* (*karana* 54). The legs are in a position as described in the text, *svastikāpasritau pādau apaviddhakramau yadā*. The hands are also in action against the chest, *uromaṇḍalagau hastau*. In this respect it comes very close to both the Chidambaram and Tañjāvūr panels. Though in the position of the



hands and legs this *karana* is very near *pādāpaviddha* (*karana* 30) also, the legs are not quite as they should be for this, *sūchividdhau apakrāntau pādau*; and thus this figure is in a pose nearer *uromaṇḍala* than *pādāpaviddha*.

Vidyudbhrānta, *karana* 65 (Fig. 16), specially

insists on the leg being shot up to almost touch the head, and the gyration of the hip, or even the whole torso, to suggest bewilderment by a look at lightning, which is sought to be conveyed through this. The text, *prishṭhato valitam pādām śiroghṛishṭam prasārayet sarvato maṇḍalāviddham vidyudbhrāntam taduchyate*, is suggested in the panel from Kumbakoṇam, representing the raised leg almost reaching the head, the movement of the torso, the hands in a whirl and the bewildered face, all suggestive of *vidyudbhrānta*. As the hands are not specified in the text, they differ in the different panels at Chidambaram, Tañjāvūr and Kumbakoṇam. The delineation of this *karāṇa* also suggests



FIG. 21. Talavilasita, karāṇa 56, late Chōla, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

to an extent *latāvṛiśchika*, where the *vṛiśchika* type of leg and the movement of the *latā* hand is important. But actually this panel has reference to *vidyudbhrānta*, scared by lightning.

Atikrānta, karāṇa 66 (Fig. 17), is a delineation of beautiful strides, and as the commentary of Abhinavagupta clearly portrays, this is to imply a heroic march, *etadapi gatiparikramādiviśhayameva*. The text, *atikrāntakramam kṛtvā puras-tāt samprasārayet*, is answered clearly in the leg put forward in a forceful march. The optional hands are here in consonance with the legs. The representation of *atikrānta* in the Chidambaram panel is rather tame, but it is more forceful at Tañjāvūr.

Another panel from Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 20) represents *apakrānta* (karāṇa 79). Unlike the Chi-



FIG. 22. Śakatāsya, karāṇa 107, late Chōla, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam. Here as well as in Chidambaram, Śakatāsya has been given in a different way from the original correct position described by Abhinavagupta as pointed out by Dr. Raghavan in his edition of *Nṛīttaratnāvalī*, by Jāya. The mistake appears to have crept in sufficiently early and should not be taken as a serious lapse in nāṭya.



FIG. 23. Lalāṭatilaka, karāṇa 50, late Chōla, 12th-13th century A.D., Sāraṅgapāṇi temple, Kumbakoṇam.

dambaram panel, which is not after the text, this is nearer the Tañjāvūr one, where the powerful stride is very clear. Here it indicates undoubtedly the *apakrānta* stride. The *kuñchita* leg is lifted up and brought down with force. The hands are optional and wherever they are

optional, they are preferred to be placed against the chest. This is the position in the panel at Kumbakoṇam.

The panel for *sūchīvidha* (*karāṇa* 78) at Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 19) is a fine delineation at Tañjāvūr, though somewhat superior in the artistic arrangement of the stance. The text *pādasūchyā yadā pādo dvitīyastu pravidyate kaṭiva-kshasthitau hastau*, one foot in *sūchī*, placed against the other, with the hands resting on the waist and chest, clearly indicate deep thought, and reflection, *chintāviśaye'sya prayogaḥ*.

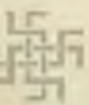
Another panel (Fig. 21) with hands in *patāka* but not yet raised up to meet somewhere over the head appears to come very close to the panel at Chidaṁbaram representing *talavilasita* (*karāṇa* 56). The same *karāṇa* at Tañjāvūr has the hands high up and there is no leg in *viśchika* as at Chidaṁbaram and in Kumbakoṇam.

Another *karāṇa* at Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 15) represents either *sarpita* (*karāṇa* 18), with one of the hands in *rechita*, the other in movement, where it is brought down to be taken up again in *rechita*, or is still in a position from which it has to be taken up to form *rechita*. It may also be the *karāṇa vaiśākharechita* (*karāṇa* 37) in which also, there is *rechita* of the hand and the leg, in addition to the movement of the neck and the waist. This is very close to both the Tañjāvūr and Chidaṁbaram panels, where, in both of them, one hand is completely in *rechita* and the other is in the process towards *rechita*. The bend of the head and the position of the legs are in the panels close to the text, *añchitā-*

pasrita *pādau śiraścha parivāhitam*, which looks more *sarpita* than *vaiśākharechita*. The *vanamālā* worn by Kṛishṇa sways as he dances and makes the movement very lively.

Another panel of this Śāraṅgapāṇi temple (Fig. 22) series shows the body bent like a wheel and probably indicates *śakaṭāśya*, *karāṇa* 107. It is not only a funny acrobatic pose but also answers the description of Abhinavagupta, explaining the purpose of the *karāṇa* to indicate juvenile sport, *bālakṛīḍādivishaye asya prayogaḥ*. It also comes very close to the Chidaṁbaram panel, where it should be upside down to be exactly like the one from Kumbakoṇam. Dr. Raghavan has given another lively interpretation of *śakaṭāśya* in explaining Jāya's text of *Nṛitaratnāvalī*, quoting the derivation of Abhinavagupta himself, which appears quite acceptable. But the confusion about the nature of the *karāṇa* appears sufficiently early to account for these sculptural representations at Chidaṁbaram and Kumbakoṇam.

Another panel from Kumbakoṇam (Fig. 20) appears almost like the *gaṅgāvatarāṇa* (*karāṇa* 108), where the legs are to be raised up and the head bent down. Though it recalls *gaṅgāvatarāṇa*, it also closely resembles the Chidaṁbaram panel representing *argala* (*karāṇa* 57). It does not, however, come very close to the latter, though, of course, the raised feet there recall the *parikrama* or the movement of Aṅgada and other monkey warriors, that sport somersaults. At Tañjāvūr however, it is actually the heroic stride which distinguishes *argala*, and not the frolicsome somersault.



GANESA, DIKPALAS AND MATRIKAS DANCE IN ACCOMPANIMENT

The beat of the drum, an accompaniment which is most essential for commencing dance, begins the musical orchestra. The drum which stresses *laya*, rhythm, is rightly the significant instrument that should precede the foot work in dance. That is why the line of Kālidāsa—*saṅgītāya prahatamurajāḥ snigdhaḡambhīraghosham*—the deep rumbling sound of the *muraja*—has a great effect in encouraging the dancer. It is the consonance of the tap of the feet with the sound of the drum that assures the skill in pure *nṛtta*. The royal artist, Agnivarṇa, was such an adept, that as he played the *mṛdaṅga*, he could easily note a stray false step of the danseuses, whom he put to shame, in the presence of their dance masters: *sa svayam prahatapushkaraḥ kṛtī lolamālyavalayo haran manah nartakīr abhinayātīlaṅghinīḥ pārsvavartishu gurushvalajjayat* (*Raghuvamśa* 19, 14).

Tradition has it that Gaṇeśa almost brought into being the drum as an accompaniment for dance. Though, however, a sculptural representation of Gaṇeśa playing the flute, most interesting in itself, comes from the Mallikārjuna temple at Śrīśailam, an inscription of slightly earlier date, Kākatīya, graphically describes the rumbling sound of the drum produced by Gaṇeśa. Only in this case, he experiments on a new form of a drum. He taps the *ambumṛidaṅga* to produce the sweetest and noblest notes. In the *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, the sound of falling drops of water on different surfaces, producing different musical notes, is mentioned: *tālīshu tāram vīṭapeshu mandram śīlāsu rūksham salīleshu chaṇḍam saṅgītaviṇā iva tāḍya-mānās tālānusāreṇa patanti dhārāḥ* (*Mṛichchhakaṭika*, 5, 52). Calculated beat on the surface of water by bathing damsels produces a musical effect: *āspḥālītam yat pramadākarāgrair mṛidaṅga-dhīradhvanīm anvagachchhat* (*Raghuvamśa* 16, 13). It is this principle of tapping the surface of water to produce sweet musical notes that accounts for the sound of the *ambumṛidaṅga*, the water drum handled by Gaṇeśa. The verse of the inscription describes Lambodara, Gaṇeśa who in his usual evening sport of patting the waves of the river Mandākinī (Gaṅgā), strikes the surface of the rolling waves, for responding

to the movements of the artistic *ārabhaṭī* dance of Lord Sambhu, by starting the sound of the water-drum (*jalataraṅga*): *pāyād vaḥ parivartamānalahariṇāgḥāram āspḥālayan sāyaṅkālataraṅgakelishu karāskandena mandākinīm devasyārabhaṭī-paribhramakalāsamrambhasambhāvinas śambhor ambumṛidaṅgavādyarachanārambhāya lambodaraḥ* (*Epigraph. Ind.* 5, p. 144).

Though Somadeva fancies that the lowering and raising of the head in dance by Gaṇeśa is to threaten obstacles and eliminate them, it is also a rhythmic movement which assures *tāla laya*. The elephant is the one animal that moves its head and trunk incessantly in the most measured fashion: *tarjayanniva vighanau-ghān namitonnamitena yaḥ muhur vibhātī śīrasā sa pāyād vo gajānanah* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 27, 1). Judged by this very important factor Gaṇeśa becomes the most appropriate in playing the drum for *lāsyā*. The bull has also a similar nod of the head as he moves on in a stately way. His nod is not only measured, but also pleasing. Nandikeśvara is also famous as the drummer for Śiva. The dance of Gaṇeśa is, as it were, showing the mirror to Śiva, as in several respects he follows his father meticulously and expounds the great science in a manner that only the wisdom of the elephant can.

Somadeva almost imagines that the temples of the elephant-god are decorated with stars, that seem to drop as he dances. The garland of stars, whirling around his knee as he dances, appears as though slipped from his temples: *namo vighnaḡite yasya jānudeśe vivartate kumbhasras-teva nakshatramālā rātrishu nṛityataḥ* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 100, 1). The time for Gaṇeśa's dance is twilight, as in the case of his father. The poet fancies that this is twilight in the interval between *yugas*, aeons, when all the worlds seem to imitate the dance of Gaṇeśa by rising and falling: *sa vo vighneśvaraḥ pāyānnamitonnamitena yam anunṛityati nṛityantam sandhyāsu bhuvanāvalīḥ* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 104, 1).

With the night advancing, Gaṇeśa dances tempestuous *tāṇḍava* with trunk upraised, from which, as it whistles, sprays multiply and

illumine the stars, dispelling darkness: *niśāsu tāṇḍavoddandaśuṇḍāsītākāśikaraiḥ jyotīmśi pushanniva vas tamo muṣṇātu vighnajit* (*Kathāsarit-sāgara* 109, 1).

As Gaṇeśa is decorated with vermilion, the streaks of red on his cheeks fly up and appear like fiery obstacles, swallowed by him and disgorged as he dances like his father, and justifies his name as Victor of Obstacles. Here is a picture of vermilion dust and its interpretation, as Gaṇeśa is himself the creator of obstacles and their destroyer. The idea of his swallowing and disgorging fiery obstacles is very telling and the quick spread of the spray is because of the nimble movement of his limbs in *tāṇḍava*: *pātu vas tāṇḍavodḍinagaṇḍasindūramāṇḍalah vāntābhipītapratyūhapratāpa iva vighnajit* (*Kathāsarit-sāgara* 111, 1).

The stars yet play a great part in decorating his dance, which is itself a festival of joy. With his trunk, Gaṇeśa brushes away the stars, and creates fresh ones, as it were, by the spray from his whistling mouth. Illuminated by the red hue of twilight, the white drops of water, as spray from his moving trunk, create the illusion of fresh stars in the sky appearing perennially: *sandhyānṛittotsave tārāḥ kareṇoddhūya vighnajit sītākāśikarair anyāḥ kalpayanniva pātu vah* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 1, 2).

Another beautiful picture of dancing Gaṇeśa represents his vermilion-stained trunk upraised, appearing a coral handle for the moon, that almost serves as an umbrella over him. The trunk itself is straightened up here as in the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of Śiva where his leg is thrown up as *daṇḍapāda*: and the word here is appropriately *uddaṇḍitaḥ karaḥ*, the hand (trunk) thrown up: *niśi vighnajito vo'vyāt tāṇḍavoddandaṇḍitaḥ karaḥ śoṇas chandrātapatrasya tanvan vidrumadaṇḍatām* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 105, 2).

Like his father, whose dance almost pulls down the earth by his own weight and the thundering thuds of his feet, as described elsewhere, Gaṇeśa also causes a similar situation by his dance. Dwarfed by the weight of the Niśumbha tread which pulls down the earth, the mountains bow to Gaṇeśa, as it were, as he dances: *niśumbhabhāranamrorvīkharvitāḥ parvatā api yam namantīva nṛityantam namāmas tam vināyakam* (*Kathāsaritsāgara* 51, 1).

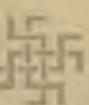
Following the example of his father, Gaṇeśa brings down cool showers to remove the fatigue

of dance, by pulling at clouds with his trunk and his hands. If Śiva could utilise the heavenly stream of his cloud-like *jaṭābhāra* on the head, Gaṇeśa could very well with his trunk and innumerable arms clap at the clouds, and enjoy a shower bath as he dances: *āvishkṛitānukṛitvibhramanāgavaktralilābhyudastakarakoṭivipātyamānāḥ ambhobhṛitas śisīraśikarabinduṣṇindavishyandino'bhinayajam klamam asya jahruḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 61).

The dance of Gaṇeśa is so delightful that it is imitated by the elephants of the quarters, springing up as the earth trembles at the stamping of Gaṇeśa's feet, his upraised trunk sucking and releasing a spray, as it were, of a circle of stars, like water drops: *avyād vo valitāṅghripātavichaladbhūgolahelonmukhabhṛāmyaddikkarikalpitānukaraṇo nṛityan gaṇagrāmaṇiḥ yasyoddaṇḍitaśuṇḍapushkaramarudvyākṛiṣṭasṛiṣṭam muhus tārāchakram udaktasikaraprishallilām ivābhyasyati* (*Subhāshitaratnakośa* 5, 13).

It is also very interesting that the poet Vasukalpa finds a parallel of *Ardhanārīśvara* in Gaṇeśa to bring him closer to Śiva. Since Gaṇeśa has a single tusk, *ekadanta*, it provides him the hermaphrodite *ardhanārī* form, the tusk on one side making him the masculine tusker, the tuskless half, rendering it feminine almost, on the other. It is obvious that it is the masculine virility as in *tāṇḍava* that is almost apparent in the projected tusk. The absence of it on the feminine side, hints also at the *lāsya* part. Gaṇeśa is an expert in both, and the verse clearly says that Gaṇeśa assumes this guise in his anxiety to imitate both Gaurī and Girīśa, his parents: *ekas sa eva paripālayatājaganti gaurīgiriśacharitānukṛitim dadhānaḥ ābhāti yo daśanaśūnyamukhaikadeśadehārdhadhāritavadhūka ivaikadantaḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnakośa* 5, 24).

Just as Gaṇeśa dances in imitation of his father, the *Mātrikās* and *Chañḍī* (Fig. 1) also dance, inspired by the great *tāṇḍava* of the Mahānaṭa. *Chañḍī* assumes almost the guise of Śiva himself by occupying the entire expanse of the universe. That her form covers heaven, earth and the netherworld is suggested in a benedictory verse from a *Chāhamāna* inscription. *Chañḍikā's* jewelled crown dazzles the demons in the sky, her tinkling waist-zone the denizens of the earth, and the sound of her anklet, in sport as she dances, the *Nāgas* of the netherworld. This beautiful suggestion of *āhārya abhinaya*, the appropriate dress for dance, is very significant indeed: *vikaṭamukūṭamādyattejasā vyomni daityān iva bhuvi maṇimayyā mekha-*



lāyāḥ kvaṇeṇa ananuraṇitalilāhamsakais trāsayanti phanīpatibhuvanāntas chaṇḍikā vas śrīye'stu (Epigraph. Ind. 9, p. 74).

Ratnākara describes Chaṇḍī's *tāṇḍava*, like Śiva's fearful unfettered dance at the end of the world, almost shaking the three worlds and with her club-like arms nearly covering up the expanse of the sky. Chaṇḍī dances victorious on the battlefield. Her unfettered dance is after the annihilation of the universe in sportive enthusiasm like the victor of the Tripuras: *ākampitatribhuvanām bhujadaṇḍakhaṇḍasañchhādītāmbaratalām samarājīreshu kas tām jagatkshayanirargalanṛttarāgalilām iva smararīpor vishaheta chaṇḍīm* (Haravijaya 36, 36).

Not only does she dance thus sportively, but she also plays a queer musical instrument, the colossal concept of which, like the bow of Tripurārī, is enough to drive terror into the minds of the demons. This *kāṇḍaviṇā* of Chaṇḍī is itself composed of Mt. Meru as the *pravāla* or the *viṇādaṇḍa*, the snake Śeṣha, the string for playing, the crescent moon as the *alābu* gourd. As she tunes this *pralaya saṅgita*, the music of the deluge, she is extolled by the Devas. In the nights of the deluge she plays the *kāṇḍaviṇā*. The concept of Tripurāntaka, with the same mountain Meru as the bow, and Śeṣha as the bow string, almost supplies the similar picture in masculine terms, where Chaṇḍī's is in the feminine: *vakshasthalivinimitāmarasailadaṇḍalagnendukhaṇḍanavabhāsvadalābupātrām āsrāvayasyatanuśeṣhaśarīratāntratantrīguṇām pralayarātrishu kāṇḍaviṇām* (Haravijaya 47, 19). The close parallelism of the *viṇā* and the bow can be seen in the *Rāmāyaṇa* where Vālmiki pictures Rāvaṇa twanging the bow on the battlefield, as if playing the *viṇā* itself, the arrow here acting as the *koṇa* or plectrum.

Even more gruesome is the dance of Chāmuṇḍā (Fig. 2) in the attitude of her terrific heavy tread in the *kaṇa Nisumbha*, appropriately pressing the earth globe, sinking the shell of the primal tortoise and in its shake upsetting the stability of the earth, splashing the waters of the seven seas into the hollows of her cheeks, abysmal in depth, thus pleasing the retinue of Śiva: *sāvashṭambhaniśumbhasambhramanamadbhūgolanishpīḍananyāñchatkarparakūrmakampavigaladbrahmāṇḍakhaṇḍasthiti pātālapratimallagallavivaraprakshiptasaptārṇavam vande nanditanilakanṭhaparishadvaktam tava kṛḍitam* (Mālatīmādhava 5, 22).



FIG. 1. Mātrikā Chaṇḍikā dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra 9th century A.D., Abaneri, Rājasthān.

With the swaying elephant hide, the nails of which tear the moon and spill ambrosia, vivifying garlands of skulls, frightened at whose loud laughter, the Gaṇas sing praises, with mountains thrown around by the spread out arms, with fearful poison fumes from the spread hoods of snakes loosened from knots as armlets, with the quarters tied together as it were by a flame circle, as the head with the red flaming eyes whirled, the stars scattered above by the tip of the long *khaṭvāṅga* weapon, is a weird and frightful picture of the dance of Chāmuṇḍā in effective onomatopoeic *daṇḍaka* composition of Bhavabhūti: *prachalitakarikṛittiparyantachañchannakhāghātābhinnendunishyandamānāmṛitachyotajivatkapālāvalīmuktachandāṭṭahāsattrasadbhūribhūtapravṛittastuti śvasadasitabhujāṅgabhogāṅgadagranthinishpīḍanotphullaphullatphaṇāpīṭhanīryadvishajyotirujjrimbhaṇoḍḍāmaravyastavistāridohkhaṇḍaparyāsitaśmādharam jvaladanalapiśaṅganetrachchhaṭābhārahīmottamāṅgabhramiprasutālātachakrakriyāsyūtadighhāgam uttūṅgakhaṭvāṅgaśrīṅgadhvajoddhūtivikshiptatārāṇam pramuditakaṭapūtanottālāvetālātālasphuṭatkarnasambhrāntagaurīghanāśleshahṛishyanmanastriyambakānandi vas tāṇḍavam devī bhūyād arishtyai cha hṛishtyai cha naḥ* (Mālatīmādhava 5, 23). This unusual grotesque dance, appreciated by the claps of the joyous goblins and ghosts deafening the ears, so frightens Gaurī that she clings to Śiva, who enjoys her embrace. Śiva here watches the dance as a spectator. The lord of *tāṇḍava*, the great master



FIG. 2. Chāmūṇḍā flanked by Bhairavas, all the three dancing, Haihaya, 10th century A.D., rock-cut panels, Kalaṅḡār

that he is himself, Śiva is also able to thoroughly enjoy it, while Devī, though equally adept in dance, being feminine, shrinks from this fearful picture of a dance of abandon.

A picture of dance, even more telling, occurs in a 7th century inscription from near Jaipur. The verse describes Chāṇḍikā dancing, having destroyed her foes, with her hands forming gesticulations and *aṅgaḥāras*, the earth agitated by the weight of her feet, with the light from her nails dispelling the darkness of the moonless light, with the hands tossed up, appearing to worship the quarters with lotuses: *nṛityantyās sāṅgaḥāram charaṇabharaparikshobhitakshmātalāyāḥ prabhrashtenduprabhāyām niśi viśṛitanakhodyotabhināndhakārāḥ ye līlodvellitāgrā vidadhātī vitātāmbhojapūjā ivāśāḥ te hastās sampadam vo dadatu vidalitadvēṣiṇas chāṇḍikāyāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 27, p. 31).

It is interesting to find such literary portrayals, both from Rajasthan and from Madhya Pradesh, or for the matter of that, from anywhere in that area, where depiction of the Mātrikās in dance is a great favourite. A very telling picture is of the emaciated form of Chāmūṇḍā, fearful in itself, depicting all the *hastas*, *karaṇas* and the nuances of dance, and often, as her hand in *tarjanī* over her lips touches the tip of her nose, suggesting wonder, she wonders at her own dance, even the hands in *alapadma* suggestive of wonder conveying the same sense. But it is not so much the wonder

of the audience alone, but of Devī herself, who is enjoying her own dance, herself the dancer and herself enjoying as the audience, performing the *rasāsvāda*.

There is an image of Chāmūṇḍā mentioned in the Banaras inscription of Pantha, of the 6th century, which mentions an image of dancing Bhavānī (Chāmūṇḍā), established at Banaras by Pantha, looking fierce and gruesome with a trailing garland of terrible cut human heads, with her body shrivelled up and looking like dried-up flesh on axe-like bones, encircled by snakes crawling all over: *tenānekavidhānadikṣhaṇasatais samsthāpitārthavayayais chaṇḍī chaṇḍanarottamāṅgarachitavyālambi-mālotkaṭā sarppatsarpaviveshītāṅgaparaśuvyāviddha-sushkāmiṣhā līlāṇṛittaruchir vilolanayanā mūrtir bhavānyās śubhā* (Epigraph. Ind. 9, p. 61).

Among Mātrikās, Chāmūṇḍā is the one emaciated figure with a very weird appearance. Atirikṭāṅga Bhairava and Bhṛīṅgīṛīti are corresponding masculine figures, equally skeleton-like. The rattling fearful dance of the skeleton figures of Bhṛīṅgīṛīti and Chāmūṇḍā together is indeed a fearful picture. They dance with their arms thrown up in ecstasy, Bhṛīṅgīṛīti calling the Gaṇas to dance, the occasion being one of joy, on the birth of Skanda. And this is what a verse attributed to Yogeśvara describes. Devī has given birth to a son. O Gaṇas! dance in great glee. Why are you still quiet? So saying with the hands thrown up in joy,



FIG. 3. Devī dancing, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayesvara temple, Udaipur.



FIG. 4. Sarasvatī dancing beside haṁsa, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayesvara temple, Udaipur.

Bhṛīṅgīṛīṭi, joyously embraced by Chāmuṇḍā, creates a great din by the rattling sound of both their skeletons coming together, drowning even the sound of the celestial drum, beaten for the occasion: *devī sūnum asūta nṛityata gaṇāḥ kim tishṭhatetyudbhujē harṣhād bhṛīṅgīṛīṭāvayāchitagirā chāmuṇḍayālīṅgite avyād vo hatadevadundubhīghana-dhvānātiriktas tayor anyonyaprachalāsthīpañjara-raṇatkaṅkālañjanmā ravaḥ* (Subhāshitaratnaśoṣa 5, 1).

As Śiva and Pārvatī witness, Kālī also commences a weird dance, as Kālidāsa pictures her. With a garland of skulls on her neck swaying all the while, her face fearful with tusks, Kālī, at the command of the Lord in a jovial mood, danced to amuse his beloved bride: *kaṇṭhasthalīlolakapālamālā daṁṣhṭrākārālānanamādhyānṛityat prītena tena prabhūṇā niyuktā kālī kalatrasya mude priyasya* (Kumārasambhava 9, 49).

Bhṛīṅgīṛīṭi also joins in the dance, at the bidding of Śiva. With the tip of the tuft quiver-

ing, with his body in grotesque flexions, and his grinning teeth, sharp and white, making his face look all teeth, Bhṛīṅgīṛīṭi danced for the amusement of Pārvatī, instructed by Śiva by a sign of his brow: *chalachchhikāgrī vikaṭāṅga-bhaṅgas sudanturas śuklasutikshṇatūṇḍaḥ bhruvo-padishṭas sa tu śaṅkareṇa tasyā vinodāya nanarta bhṛīṅgī* (Kumārasambhava 9, 48).

The Gaṇas of Śiva do not lag behind in imitating their Lord in dance. They are so full of enthusiasm that they very correctly depict all the emotions, the nine flavours, meticulously indicated in their *abhinaya*: and they not only excel in *aṅga* and *bhāva abhinaya*, but look very colourful in their *ākārya* dress. They thus make the success of dance complete. The dance hall is specially decorated to make their dance all the more effective. The *pramathagaṇas* of Śiva, pink, tawny, dark and jasmine white in bodily hue, and lost in the most delicate nuances of dance, move in gesticulation, like



FIG. 5. Varuṇa dancing on makara, Kākātīya, 12th century A.D., from ceiling of Rāmappa temple, Palampet, Hyderabad Museum.

the very flavours (*rasas*) incarnate on the well-decked stage for dance: *āpītapāṭalasitetarakundagauradehatviṣho lalitanartanavibhramasthāḥ bhremur gaṇādhipatayo'bhinayakriyāsu mūrtā rasā iva parish-kritaraṅgapīṭhāḥ* (*Haraviṇaya* 2, 22).

The Saptamātrikās, of whom Chāmuṇḍā is one, and should therefore fall in line with the others, like Brāhmī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Indrāṇī and Vārāhī, dance to the song in praise of the *apadāna*, or auspicious story of Śiva. The *śubhacharita* of Śiva is the theme of the dance as Kālidāsa describes it elsewhere, like the theme of Tripuraviṇaya, the greatest exploit of Śiva for the song of the Kinnarīs, *tripuraviṇayo gīyate kinnarībhiḥ*. Devī herself being a great adept in dance (Fig. 3), she is placed in the centre. With Devī amidst them, the Saptamātrikās explain by their looks and glances, expressive of emotions, fleeting and sweet, covering a vast range of expressive gesture, rendered with ease and delicacy, covering the theme of praise of the auspicious story of Śiva, the crescent moon-crested: *kroḍīkṛitādrītanayās śaśikhāṇḍamaulīmaulāpadānarachitastuṭī mātaraṣ tat lilālālāmālalitābhīnayaprapaṇchasañchārachāru rasabhāvadriśo'bhīnīnyuḥ* (*Haraviṇaya* 2, 21).

In the beautiful picture of the dance and *abhinaya* of the Mātrikās, there are various important factors in dance stressed, like a well chosen theme of magnificence, which would constitute the *vāchika abhinaya*. The *apadāna*

is the exploit of Śiva himself. *Rasadrishṭis* and *bhāvadriṣṭis* are suggested by the glances, a variety including *kānta* in the former and *snigdha* in the latter. The *rasas* like *śrīṅgāra* and the rest are also implied. As in the case of the Gaṇeśa, where they are taken to be *rasas* personified, themselves of various hues, here also, the various hues of *rasas*, like *śrīṅgāra*, are implied. It is an accepted belief that *śrīṅgāra* is dark (*śyāma*), *hāsya* white, *karuṇa* pinkish grey and *raudra* tawny red: *syāmo bhavati śrīṅgāras sito hāsyaś cha kīrtitaḥ kapotaḥ karuṇas chaiva rakto raudraḥ prakīrtitaḥ*.

The dance of Śiva is such that it invites the attention of the gods in an enthusiasm to join in what may be called a contagious charming sway of limbs in rhythmic movement. Agni, one of the *lokapālas*, like the other guardians of the quarters, joins the dance. The leaping of fire and the dance of the flame, is a sight too well known for delineation, and the dance of Agni personified is a natural sequence, like that of Vāyu, the blowing wind, Varuṇa that leaps on the wave and moves on concentric ripples of water (Fig. 5), and the rest.

A great connoisseur and lover of art and beauty, Kāma, as the poet fancies, offers himself as an appreciative reward by offering his body in the flames of the fire that dances so well on the forehead of Śiva: *bhālasthalīraṅgatale mṛḍasya hutāśanas tāṇḍavakṛit sa vo'vyāt yasmin*

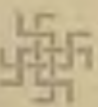




FIG. 6. Sarasvatī dancing on swan, Kākatiya, 12th century A.D., from ceiling of Rāmappa temple, Pālampet, Hyderabad Museum.

ratiprāṇasamas śarīram unmālakāyeva nijam mumocha (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 1, 3).

Agni, as the tip of the arrow of Tripurāntaka, with his flames like innumerable arms of the goddess of victory, dances in sheer joy, at the burning of the Tripuras by Tripurāntaka. This is a dance of victory in which Agni has also his own great part: *jvālādaṇḍāḥ purapari-bhavārambhasamrambhayoge lolāḥ kolāhalitakakubhi vyomni bhargāstravahneḥ navyotsāhotsavabṛihadupa-krāntanṛittakriyāyā rejur vyaktā iva subahavo bāhavo viśvalakshmyāḥ* (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 24, 14).

A whole series of dancing *lokapālas* are known from the ceilings of the *maṇḍapas* of Kākatiya temples, like the Rāmappa from Pālampet and others, as from Wārangal, each one of them like Vāyu and Varuṇa, distinguished by his vehicle, like the deer or the *makara* respectively.

There are several dancing figures of Sarasvatī, who is the goddess not only of learning and music, but also of dance, since *Gāndharva Veda* includes music and dance, and Sarasvatī, like her Lord, is a great adept in dance (Figs. 4, 6). As she dances skilfully, as the poet puts it, on the tongues of poets, she is approached by fleets of swans attracted by the sound of her anklets. This is a wonderful picture of the jingling of

the anklets of Sarasvatī, resembling the sweet warble of the birds, and her skilful dance is most effective in the great poetic composition which form, as it were, the *vāchika* part of *abhinaya*: *vaidagdhyaśiddhim vidadhātu devī kavīndrajihvāñchalanartakī vaḥ yām nūpurāsvānahṛiteva nityam āsevate vāhamarālapālī* (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 1, 35).

Probably the most effective sculptures representing this theme come from Halebīd. It is not a single one, but several panels, as Sarasvatī dancing is a favourite theme. Among the *Mātrikās*, Brāhmī also has almost the same form as of Sarasvatī dancing. She dances as Sarasvatī does as a goddess specially devoted to art. As a *Mātrikā* she is Brāhmī, famous in iconographic concept as one who aided Skanda and Mahishāsuramardini Durgā in their heroic encounter with Tāraka and Mahisha.

The dance of Śiva is so fascinating that when a temple for him is situated on the banks of a river like Godāvarī or Narmadā, the river is fancied to offer a tribute of dance to the great Lord of dance. Thus, in a Kalachuri inscription of Yaśahkarṇa of the eleventh century, Godāvarī is made a dancer, approaching Bhīmeśvara with her moving waves, as her brows in action in dance, and the swans on the waters singing

the seven notes of the musical orchestra for the dance: *andhrādhiśam arandhradorvilasitam svachchhandam uchchhindatā yenābhyarchyata bhūribhis sa bhagavā bhīmeśvaro bhūṣhaṇaiḥ yasyābhyarṇagatā pranṛityalaharibhrūvālligodāvarī gāyatyunmadaham-sanādamadhurais srotassvarais saptabhiḥ* (Corps. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 304).

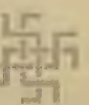
As the whole spirit of dance develops, the little boy Skanda who is also enthusiastic in joining this festival of dance, naturally in juvenile fashion, decides on gesticulation of *hāsya*, fun, and so he assumes the role of a Vidūshaka. As a child, he takes certain liberties and so he pulls at the crescent moon of his father, to use it as the *kuṭiladaṇḍa* or the crooked staff, always associated with the Vidūshaka, in Sanskrit drama. Pārvatī who witnesses all this dance, cannot help heartily laughing at this sight. Śiva, as he dances, has his crest crescent moon pulled by Skanda (peacock-bannered) dancing in the role of a Vidūshaka, brandishing it as a curved hand stick, Pārvatī, the daughter of the Himālaya, laughingly looking on enjoying the fun: *alokatastuhinaśāila-bhuvā sahāsam ākrishya śekharaśāṅkakalām smarāreḥ nṛityan vidūshakabhuvam bhujagāriketuragre chakāra kuṭilonnatadaṇḍakāśhṭham* (Haravijaya 2, 58).

Even the peacock commences a dance inspired by the blue throat of Śiva, which creates the illusion of a cloud, and this is what he has observed and learnt from the great Lord of dance himself. Śiva's blue throat, creating the illusion of a dark laden cloud, the peacock of Skanda dances as if eager to show what he has learnt from him: *sphuṭakālakūṭavishakūṭa-kandharākṛitanīrabhāraguruvāridabhramāḥ upadeśa-lābharabhasād ivāgratas tava nātha nṛityati kumāra-chandrakī* (Haravijaya 6, 179).

Like the peacock, the vehicle of Skanda, participating in the dance, actually in the dance part of it, Nandi also participates, but not himself dancing, as being an adept on the drum, he plays the instrument as Taṇḍu, with whom is associated *tāṇḍava*, sings the *gītaka*

tāṇḍava. As Nandiśa violently beats the drum with his hands, and *murajas* sounded in the two-fold manner of delicate touch and violent beat, which again is divided into the three modes of *jyeshtha*, *madhyama* and *kanishtha*, with the seven-fold classification of *āvāpa*, *udvāpa*, *nishkrāma*, *vikshepa*, *praveśa*, *śamana*, *sannipāta* all of which nuances of the beat of the drum, made it adequately sweet, Taṇḍu sings the *gītaka tāṇḍava*, the appropriate song for the tumultuous dance of Śiva: *nandiśanirdayakarā-hatapushkareṣu mandram dhvanatsu murajeshu vibhajya taṇḍuḥ āsāriteshu parikalpitasaptabhedaparyāptaśobham atha tāṇḍavam abhyagāyat* (Haravijaya 2, 20).

Nandi as an adept on the drum, has all the three varieties before him, the three drums, the *aṅkya* and the *ūrdhva* before him, which he carefully plays, producing *gāndhāra* on the left of the *aṅkya*, *śadja* to the right, the top of the *ūrdhva* used for the *pañchama*. There are the famous *svaras* of the *mṛdaṅga* and thus the drums were made to produce all the six notes. From the commentary of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the latter the commentator of Bharata's *nāṭya* itself, the great poet Ratnākara has given a taste of his extraordinary knowledge of music and dance, *Gāndharoavidyā*, by going into the details of the beat of the *muraja* by Nandi, and in a verse, which has variant reading, giving more of the technicalities of the art of drum-beat, has pictured the skill of Nandi in this art. And then, there was the play of the drum with the seven notes, in the mode of beat, like *mārga*, *chitra*, *prachāra*, *yati*, *pāṇilaya*, making them all so alluring. All the clear methods of use of the instrument are strictly in accordance with propriety in following the *karaṇas* and clearly symbolise *mārjanā*: *ājaghnire svaraviśeshakṛitāsthāmārgachitraprachārayatipāṇilayābhirāmāḥ vispaṣṭavādyavidhayaḥ karaṇānubandhabhājāḥ krameṇa murajās sphuṭamārjanāṅkāḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 19). (Another reading: *ājaghnire'tha murajāḥ pravibhaktamārgachitraprachārayatipāṇilayaprapañchāḥ sammārjanā-karaṇayogavibhaktamārgachetoharābhimatavādyavidhivyavasthāḥ*.)



THE VEDIC ROOTS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE GREAT DANCER

Śiva's dance is associated with creation, protection and destruction of the universe—*śrīṣṭi*, *sthiti* and *samhāra*. There is beyond this also a deeper and more significant effect—the removal of the veil of ignorance and the ultimate salvation granted. This philosophic interpretation of the dance is explained in another chapter in detail but the basis for all this thought is explained in the following pages. The Vedic thought, which is at the root of all later iconographic concepts, is to be examined at some length to understand what has become so integral a part of a great concept of Śiva in the early and medieval period of history.

Śiva as Dancer in the Mahābhārata

By the time of the text of the *Mahābhārata*, a clear picture of Śiva as a great dancer had emerged and he is described as dance-crazy, an eternal dancer and the dancer par excellence: *nṛityapriyo nityanarto nartakas sarvalālasaḥ* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 17, 50). Even the iconographic concept of a multi-armed Śiva carrying different attributes has emerged. Śiva has such attributes as the wheel, trident, club, pestle, sword, shield. His favourite attire and adornment are also clearly stated as the elephant-hide garment, the snake waist-cord, snake ear-coil and a reptile sacred-thread. He sings and dances and plays different musical instruments, accompanied by his Gaṇas: *chakrī śūlagadāpāṇir musalī khadgapattīṣī bhūdhara nāga-mauñjī cha nāgakunḍalakunḍalī nāgayajñopavitī cha nāgacharmottarachchhadaḥ hasate gāyate chaiva nṛityate cha manoharam vādayatyapi vādyāni vichitrāṇi gaṇair yutaḥ* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 14, 154, 156).

Śiva, who, in classical sculpture, is always associated with Pārvatī, as the principal witness of his dance, is even so described in the *Mahābhārata*. He is pictured in the company of Pārvatī and the Gaṇas, all of them engaged in music, dance, mirth and play: *pārvatya sahitam devam bhūtasamṅghais cha bhāsvaraiḥ gītavādītrasamṇādair hāsyalāsyasamanvitam* (*Mahābhārata* vii, 80, 39, 40).

Śiva's profound knowledge of music, and his excellence in this great art, as in dance, is also clearly described, and he is significantly here

mentioned as in the company of Apsaras, who attend on him: *mahāgīto mahānṛityo hyapsaroga-nasevitaḥ* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 17, 117). Śiva is an adept in all the musical instruments which he plays with equal dexterity and he is actually styled a lyrist, a drummer, flutist and so forth. He can sound all the bugles and trumpets and play all the varieties of drum: *veṇavī paṇavī tālī khalī kalakaṭamkaṭaḥ sarvatūryaninādi cha sarvātodyaparigrahaḥ* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 17, 58, 61). In the Śivasahasranāma of the *Mahābhārata*, among the thousand names of Śiva are included such descriptive ones as the habitual dancer and player of mouth instruments (pipe or flute), one pleased with song offerings and resplendent with orchestra: *namo nartanaśīlāya mukhavādītravādīne nādyopahāralubdhāya gītavādītraśīline* (*Mahābhārata* xii, 284, 88). Śiva imparted knowledge of all the sixtyfour arts (*kalās*) to sage Garga on the banks of the river Sarasvatī: *chatusshashṭyaṅgamadadāt kalājñānam mamādbhutam sarasvatyaś taṭe tushṭo manoyajñena pāṇḍava* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 18, 38). Here is the concept of Śiva as Viṇā-Dakṣiṇāmūrti, so common in sculpture, sometimes carrying the *viṇā* as a dancer, often, as in the form of Virābhadrā, beginning a series of *saptamātrikās*, flanked at the extreme end by Gaṇeśa, and occasionally also patting the drum. Playing the drum while dancing has an interesting instance from Baḍoh in the Gwalior Museum, and playing the *aṅkya* type of drum seated, is seen in a unique example of Mṛidaṅga-Dakṣiṇāmūrti from the Pāṇḍya monolithic rockcut shrine at Kaḷugumalai. In anticipation of a dictum of the *Vishṇudharmottara*, that the best artist or sculptor is possible only by combining a knowledge of allied arts, like music and dance and literature, Śiva is also described as the great artist, the best and the perpetuator of all arts: *śilpikas śilpinām śreṣṭhas sarvaśilpapravartakaḥ* (*Mahābhārata* xii, 284, 143).

Śiva Propounds Grammar

The story of Śiva as the great master who propounded grammar to the world, by sounding the drum and creating the fourteen *sūtras*, is very well known: *nṛitāvāsāne naṭarājarājo nanāda dhakkām navapañchavāram uddhartukāmas sanakādisiddhān etad vimarśe śivasūtrajālam*. At

Tiruvottiyūr there is a grand instance of a munificent grant made for the maintenance of a pavilion, known as *Vyākaraṇadāna-maṇḍapa*, for the upkeep of teachers and pupils who studied grammar, and for the worship of the Lord Vyākaraṇadānaperumāl, who it was believed in this very *maṇḍapa* was pleased to appear before Pāṇini Bhagavān for fourteen continuous days to teach him the first fourteen aphorisms which begin Pāṇini's grammar. This is an instance in the early Chōla period of the worship of the Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti Śiva or Naṭeśa, who taught the essentials of grammar to Pāṇini by the beat of his drum. This concept can be traced to the *Mahābhārata*, where the grace of Śiva to Pāṇini is carried back to an early age, by making Śākalya, the great grammarian, a devotee of Śiva, who acquired his stupendous knowledge of grammar through the grace of the Lord. Śākalya, as we know, is an early grammarian, often mentioned by name for his views in the *sūtras* of Pāṇini. It is interesting that in the *Mahābhārata* there are the germs of the tradition of a great science revealed to Pāṇini in the earlier legend of Śākalya himself, become a great grammarian by Śiva's grace: *śākalyas samśitātmā vai navavarshaśatānyapi ārādhayāmāsa bhavam manoyajñena keśava tam chāha bhagavānstuṣṭo granthakāro bhaviṣhyasi vatsākshayā cha te kīrtis trailokye vai bhaviṣhyati* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 14, 100, 101).

Śiva, Master of Music

In music also it is Śiva who dominates. He assures Nārada that he would be great in music like himself. This blessing of Śiva to the sage, pleased with his devoted worship, is also described in the *Mahābhārata*: *nāradena tu bhaktyāsau bhava ārādhitaḥ purā tasya tuṣṭo mahādevo jagau devagurur guruḥ tejasā tapasā kīrtiyā tvatsamo na bhaviṣhyati gītena vāditavyena nityam mām anuyāsyasi* (*Mahābhārata* xiii, 14, 106, 108).

In the *Matsyapurāṇa* there is a regular iconographic form of the northern variety of Naṭarāja, particularly, the north-eastern variety, clearly described, where the attributes already seen, mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, are elaborated.

Sabhāpati

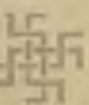
But the germ of all this has to be sought in the far earlier Vedic texts. Naṭarāja is usually associated with *chit sabhā* in Puṇḍarikapura, Chidambaram. He is there in the golden hall, as the Prince among dancers and the Lord of the Assembly. In fact, Śiva is known as Sabheśa

or Sabhāpati or Naṭana-Sabhāpati. This concept of the Lord of Assembly has to be sought in the Rudra-adhyāya of the *Taittirīya Śamhitā*: *namaḥ sabhābhyas sabhāpatibhyas cha* (*Taittirīya Śamhitā* iv, 5, 3, 2; *Vājasaneyi Śamhitā* xvi, 24; *Kāthaka Śamhitā* xvii, 13).

Vyāghrapāda and Patañjali

Another concept closely associated with Śiva Naṭarāja at Chidambaram is that of the twin devotees, the sages Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda. These sages also go back to great antiquity. Patañjali here is not the grammarian Patañjali, with whom usually the great devotee saint of Chidambaram is associated and who is also believed to be the incarnation of Ādiśeṣha himself, according to the account of a fecund legend which had grown around him in later day literature. Both in the *sthala-purāṇas*, like *Patañjalivijaya* of Rāmabhadra Dikshita and *Kāvya* like *Naṭeśavijaya* by Venkateśa Dikshita, the legend of tiger's legs vouchsafed for Vyāghrapāda, had gained such root, that the sage is so represented in sculpture, as early as in the earliest phase of the Chōlas. The local legend of Upamanyu as the son of Vyāghrapāda and the sister of sage Vasiṣṭha, betrothed to Vyāghrapāda, is so early that the incident of Śiva's mercy to child Upamanyu, by favouring him with an ocean of milk, where his father could not afford even a single cow to provide the milk, is clearly stated in an inscription from Champā of the 6th-7th centuries. The story of Upamanyu occurs, however, in the *Mahābhārata* and several other *Purāṇas*. The legend of Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda, even as it is understood today, is not very late. At least it is as old as the time of the early Pallavas themselves, as the earliest renovated temple of Śiva in Chidambaram owes its existence to a Hiranyavarman, undoubtedly of the early Pallava dynasty.

But the concept of this Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda goes back to Upanishadic age. In the name of Patañjali here, there is a mix up of the authors of the two systems of philosophy Yoga and Sāṅkhya. Patañjali and Kapila are the two well-known sages who propounded them. There is also again Patañjali, the author of the Yoga *sūtras*, often equated with the author of the grammatical commentary on Pāṇini, though both are different. As early as in the time of Bhoja, the Paramāra ruler, Patañjali is described by this royal polymath as the author of treatises on grammar, philosophy and medicine. Patañjali and Kapila,



the names of the sages who originated the twin systems of Sāṅkhya and Yoga, are almost reminiscent of the name Patañchala Kāpya, the name of a sage mentioned twice in the *Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣad* (iii, 3, 1: 7, 1). Weber feels that this name is reminiscent of Kapila and Patañjali, authors of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system, though later writers like Garbe, Macdonell and Keith regard this as quite improbable. It is not improbable, as memories of ideas linger through the ages and are revisualised in later literature. Patañjali associated with dancing Śiva is usually represented half a reptile in theri-anthropomorphic form. He is thus equated with Śeṣha himself. The famous image of Patañjali of the late Chola period from one of the niches of the *gopura* at Chidambaram represents him in this fashion. In medieval literature there are references to the great grammarian Patañjali as an incarnation of the serpent couch of Viṣṇu himself. But it is mainly as a sage and devotee of Śiva that he is represented in the dance scene at Chidambaram. In the *Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣad*, it is an early sage Patañchala Kāpya, a combined concept of Patañjali and Kapila, both sages, that occurs, though it is the name of a single sage.

Vyāghrapāda is the other great sage, a devotee of Natarāja, along with Patañjali. According to legend, he married the sister of Vaśiṣṭha and had a son Upamanyu, to feed whom with milk, he had not the wherewithal, when the Lord in his mercy made an ocean of milk available to the child. This Vyāghrapāda was such a great devotee of Śiva that he had not the patience to gather slowly *Bilva* leaves, avoiding thorns as he plucked them. At his request Śiva endowed him with the feet of a tiger so that he would not experience the prick of thorns as he gathered the sprouts for worship. This story of Vyāghrapāda, the sage with tiger's feet, is a legend arising from the misconstruing of the components forming the name Vyāghrapāda. Actually, the name has to be sought in a very early reference, Vaiyāghrapadiputra, son of a female descendent of Vyāghrapāda, the name of a teacher, a pupil of Kaṇvīputra in the Kaṇva recension of the lost *vaṁśa* (list of teachers) in the *Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣad* (vi, 5, 1). In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (x, 6, 1, 8), and *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* (v, 14, 1) it occurs as Vaiyāghrapadya, descendant of Vyāghrapāda, a patronymic of Indradyumna Bhallaveya. It also occurs as the patronymic of Budila Aśvatarāśvi and of Gośruti in the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* (v, 16, 1; v, 2, 3)

and *Saṅkhāyana Āranyaka* (ix, 7). It is also a patronymic of Rāma Krātujāteya in the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* (iii, 40.1; iv, 16, 1).

Dance and Music in the Veda

To understand the importance of the concept of the Great Dancer in the Vedic age, it is essential to consider the position accorded to the fine arts, particularly music and dance in the life of the society of the time. A hymn describes in unequivocal terms that dance and laughter invite us forth to further and prolong our very life and existence: *prāñcho agāma nṛitaye hasāya drāghīya āyuh pratarāmadadhānāḥ* (*Rigveda* x, 1, 8, 3). 'We have gone forth for dancing and for laughing, to further times prolonging our existence.' (R. T. H. Griffith). Śilpa means art, of which three kinds, *nṛitya*, *gīta* and *vādita* are enumerated (*Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa* xxix, 5). Dance was so very popular that the term *nṛitu* for dancer occurs very often. The actor or dancer, styled *śailūsha*, is known and mentioned (*Vājasaneyi Samhitā* xxx, 6; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* iii, 4, 2, 1). The mention in Vedic literature of music and musicians, adept in playing different types of instruments, clearly indicates the study of music and its appreciation in that far off age. *Āḍambarāghāta*, a kind of drummer, playing the drum called *āḍambara* (*Vājasaneyi Samhitā* xxx, 19; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* xiv, 4, 8, 1), *Dundubhya* (*Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, xvi, 35), a drummer connected with or playing the drum *dundubhi* (*Rigveda* i, 28, 5; vi, 47, 29, 31), *Viṇāgāthin*, a lute player (*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* iii, 9, 14, 1; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* xiii, 1, 5, 1) are accompanists to the vocal musicians, well versed in music, styled *Vādita* (*Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa* xxix, 5). Song and music are called *gīta-vādita* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* viii, 2, 8). *Vādita* is usually associated with *nṛitya* and *gīta*, as in the *Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa*. There are various musical instruments mentioned, like *āḍambara* (drum), *vāṇa* (flute), *viṇā* (lute), so that the orchestra was complete.

In the *Rigveda* (x, 32, 4), there is clear reference to seven notes (*dhātus*) of the instrument. These notes are also called seven *vāṇīs* (*Rigveda* i, 164, 24; iii, 1, 6; ix, 103, 3), a harp with a hundred strings, *śatatantrī* used at the Mahāvratā ceremony (*Aitareya Āranyaka* v, 1, 4) is also a *vāṇa*. *Vāṇa* is very often mentioned in the *Rigveda* (i, 85, 10; viii, 20, 8; ix, 97, 8; x, 32, 4). The term occurs in the *Taittirīya Samhitā* (vii, 5, 9, 2), *Kāthaka Samhitā* (xxxiv, 5), and other *Brāhmaṇas* like *Pāñchaviṁśa*

Brāhmaṇa (v, 6, 12; xiv, 7, 8: *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* v, 1, 4). There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is a flute or a lute. But as there is the term *viṇā* also, occurring in the latter *Samhitās*, like the *Taittirīya Samhitā* (vi, 1, 4, 1), *Kāthaka Samhitā* (xxxiv, 5), *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* (iii, 6, 1) and *Brāhmaṇas*, like *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (iii, 2, 4, 6), it is possible that *vāṇa*, which originally may have meant the lyre, came to be more associated with the flute. A *viṇā-vāda*, a lute player is mentioned in the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* of the *Yajurveda* (xxx, 20) in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (iii, 4, 1 5, 1) and also later in the *Upanishads*, like the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* (ii, 4, 8; iv, 5, 9). The *viṇā* was such a valuable instrument and such a favourite, that the purpose of the parts of the *viṇā* was carefully studied and understood, and nomenclature accordingly used, like *śiras* for the head, *udara* for the cavity, *ambhaṇa* for the sounding board, *tantra* for string and *vādana* for the plectrum. Even the subtle variations in the tunes, as they were specially distinguished, are known from such terms, like *uttaramandra* in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (xiii, 4, 2, 8).

Indra and Other Vedic Deities as Dancers

It is in this context that the position of dance has to be understood, along with music, as both go together. The *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa*, in fact, mentions dance and song together in the term, *ṛittagīta* (i, 42). The dancer in the *Rigveda* is called *ṛitu*, and several gods are specially associated with dance. Indra is probably the most conspicuous as the god who dances. He is the lord of men, the Dancer whose praise was sung from the most ancient times: *yaḥ pūrvyāmanuṣṭutimīṣe kṛiṣṭinām ṛrituḥ* (*Rigveda* viii, 68, 7). Indra, the dancer, is the great bestower of abundant strength: *Indra inno mahānām dātā vājānām ṛrituḥ* (*Rigveda*, viii, 92, 3). The Maruts, *ṛritavaḥ*, also dance, exhibiting the *āhārya* element of dance, as they are described wearing golden necklets on their chest: *martaschidvo ṛritavo rukmavakshasa upa bhrātrivamāyati* (*Rigveda*, viii, 20, 22). Aśvins, famed for their magic arts among the celestials, are great dance heroes: *pra māyābhirmāyina bhūtamatra narā ṛritū janimanyajñiyanām* (*Rigveda* viii 63, 5). The Ādityas, as explained by Śāyana, to mean the gods mentioned in the hymn, are also dancers: *yaddevā adas salile susamrabdhā atishṭhata atra vo ṛrityatāmiva tīvro reṇurapāyata* (*Rigveda* x, 72, 6). The description of dawn is the most charming in *Rigvedic* literature, rising to the heights of sublime composition as a picture of the great Dancer. Ushas is a dancer

well-dressed, the very picture of beauty, creating light and repelling darkness, like the cow which yields her udder, she bares her breast: *adhi peśāmsi vapate ṛritūrivāporṇute vaksha usreva barjaham jyotirviśvasmai bhuvanāya kṛiṇvati gāvo na vrajam vyushā āvartamaḥ* (*Rigveda* i, 92, 4). The picture of dawn coming dancing is so effective that Griffith cannot help recalling Milton's line 'now the bright morning-star, day's harbinger, comes dancing from the east' to echo the *Rigvedic* line, *pra te asyā ushasaḥ prāparasyā ṛritau syāma ṛritamasya ṛṇinām* (*Rigveda* x, 29, 2).

The picture of dancing Aśvins cannot but bring to one's mind a form of Sūrya, the parent of the Aśvins, in a peculiar iconographic concept, wherein Śiva, Rudra and Āditya are combined as Mārtāṇḍa Bhairava, who dances on a ship, a famous sculpture from Koṇārak. In the *Rigveda*, the Aśvins are invoked on the ship of hymns, heaven's wide vessel to bear to the other shore: *ā no nāvā matinām yātam pārāya gantave yuñjāthām aśvinā ratham aritram vām divasprithu tīrthe sindhūnām rathaḥ* (*Rigveda* 1, 46, 7-8).

It is an identical concept, after millenniums, that we find in the figure of Mārtāṇḍa Bhairava, closely associated with the Aśvins, as it is the parent of the Aśvins or their source, Sūrya, associated with Rudra, that composes this pattern. As several visions like the Aśvins, Maruts, Agni and Indra go to make up the later concept of Śiva as the eternal dancer, creator, sustainer and destroyer, the poser of illusions and their remover, assurer of deliverance, it is interesting to trace such ideas from earlier attributes and qualities in their transformed late iconographic concepts of the historical period, millennia after the *Rigvedic* age.

When we go more into the dance of Indra, the aspects of his activities become clear. He is the immortal Dancer, who, enveloping the earth by his glory, bestows prosperity, as the abode of all treasures: *paprikshenyaṃ idam tve hyajo ṛrimṇāni cha ṛritamāno amartaḥ sa na enīṃ vasavāno rayim dāḥ prāryas stushe tuvimaghasya dānam* (*Rigveda* v, 33, 6). Attired in glory, Indra dances for the heaven to look on, and devotees embrace his feet for prosperity. He is thunder-armed, rich in bestowing and strong in overcoming foes: *śriye te pādā duva ā mimikshur dhṛiṣṇur vajrī śavasa dakṣiṇāvān vasāno atkam surabhim dṛiṣe kam svarṇa ṛritavishiro babhūva*

(*Rigveda* vi, 29, 3). His is a war dance. He is the destroyer of *purāṣ*, forts, ninety of them: *bhinat puro navatim indra pūrave divodāsāya dāśushe nṛito* (*Rigveda* i, 130, 7). Addressed as a great dancer, Indra is eulogised as the one whose primal ancient achievement was a heroic deed, worthy of praise in heaven: *tava tyan-naryam nṛito'pa indra prathamam pūrvam divi pravāchyam kṛitam* (*Rigveda* ii, 22, 4).

Creation itself is an act of dance as we have it in a hymn of the *Rigveda*. As the celestial dancers danced, they raised a cloud of dust by kicking up the atoms which formed the earth. The hymn describes the Devas as dancing close-clasping one another, when from their feet, the thickening cloud arose: *yaddevā adas salile susamrabdhā atishṭhata atrā vo nṛityatāmiva tiro reṇur apāyata* (*Rigveda* x, 72, 6).

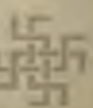
Śiva's Dance against this Background

Against this background should be understood the concept of Śiva dancing and its significance. Śiva is Asṭamūrti and Bharata, in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*, specifically mentions each particular *mūrti* of Śiva in dance like *jalamaya-mūrti*, *tejomūrti*, *ākāśamūrti* and so forth. Maruts, as dancers, should be understood as his *vāyurūpa*, Ushas or Ādityas as dancers would be his *tejorūpa*, combined with the *lāsyā* aspect of Devī forming one half of his body. Āsvins as dancers would, both by their association with Sūrya, as his offspring in later literature, and with Chandra, *Oshadhīśa*, the lord of *oshadhi* herbs, coming close to the physicians of the gods, bring themselves in close proximity to both the celestial bodies, which are among those that make up Asṭamūrti, thus revealing germs of the composition of Śiva, combining celestial elements brought together in this eight-fold form. The concept of various gods dancing, and particularly Indra, as the destroyer of *purāṣ*, comes very close to Śiva-Rudra as the destroyer of the Tripuras, who dances the heroic war dance, as much after the destruction of the Tripuras as after the annihilation of Andhaka and Gaja, darkness, illusion, chaos, as he brings the earth into being in the primeval waters. He is thus the creator and the sustainer, the mighty, the hero, the dancer par excellence. This form of Śiva, as a great Dancer, in later times, is to be understood with reference to details of Vedic attributes. He is ruler in myriad forms, his dance, as dance should, represents the universe in all its divers forms.

Nāṭya is *trailokya-anukritiḥ*. That is why in the *Rudrādhyāya*, he is adored as Virūpa and Viśvarūpa: *namo virūpebhyo viśvarūpebhyas cha vo namaḥ*. The Bhāṣhya gives *virūpaḥ* as *vikṛitarūpaḥ* and *viśvarūpaḥ* as *nānārūpaḥ*.

The drum is the most important instrument for dance. That is why both the drum and the drum-stick are mentioned as of the form of Śiva in the *anuvāka* of *Rudra*, *namo dundubhyāya chāhanayāya cha*, the Bhāṣhya explains *dundubhyāya* as *dundubhau bheryām bhavaḥ dundubhyaḥ āhananāḥ dundubhyāghātārtho daṇḍaḥ tatra bhavaḥ āhananyaḥ*. The tradition of explaining the musical lord is clear in the Bhāṣhya, where this *Anuvāka* has Rudra as its *devatā* and a *dhyānaśloka* recalling the dancing Lord: *jaṭābhīr lambamānābhir nṛityantam abhayapradam devam suchismitam dhyāyed vyāghracharmaparishkṛitam*.

Again, the great musical master and dancer is to be understood not as a mere lord of an assembly, a *sabhā*, but the Lord of the great dancing hall itself, expressed by a significant term, *sabhāpati*. The word *tishṭadbhyaḥ* and *dhāvadbhyas* preceding *sabhāpati* is suggestive of movements, not any movement but graceful movements, movements associated, as seen from the context, with dance. In this, *āsīnebhyas* like *śayānebhyas*, *svapadbhyaḥ* and *jāgradbhyas*, are also to be taken as actions inhibiting life in dance. Śiva's foot raised in dance is a faint echo of the *uttānapada* mentioned in the *Rigveda*, which has its own sense of a figure recumbent, face upwards, legs stretched, as in the case of Kshīrasāgaraśayana Raṅganātha, but also in the more dynamic figure of dancing Śiva, significant as an interpretation of the same term in terms of dance, no doubt, at a later date. It is here most important to understand the recumbent form of Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa on primeval waters, creating the universe, like the dynamic dance form of Śiva, Rudraśiva. A wonderful comparative study of Śeṣhaśāyī Viṣṇu, on the waters, and Kuñchitapāda Śiva, as dancer, with all the Vedic significance conveyed as a faint echo into the later-day figures, is most ably presented in the paper Nārāyaṇa Naṭarāja Complex by T. G. Aravamuthan. The details into which he has gone to show the sameness of concept, with drum and flame in the hands of Śiva, represented through the conch and the solar wheel, in the hands of Viṣṇu, is very ably discussed. One cannot fail to see that *vāk* or sound in space is symbol of creation. This is how, when the drum is sounded, the fundamental grammatical apho-



risms are revealed perfecting *vāk*, the most coherent and immaculate expression, and as the revealer of this, he is the Lord of sound rhythm par excellence. Rhythmic sound would go well with pure dance, *nṛitta*, while sensible expression conveyed through *abhinaya* gesticulation, the language of dance itself, would form *nṛitya*. He is thus the creator of not only *vyakta* or *avyakta* sound, but the meaningless and the meaningful as well.

Remover of Māyā

The concept of Śiva as the great dancer, removing the veil of ignorance in his *pañchakṛitya*, is also to be sought in a very early idea of illusion, associated with Indra in the *Vedas*. It is already noted that in several details many attributes of Indra go with Śiva, as the great dancer, at a later period in history. Even in the *Purāṇas* there are three *māyās* very clearly mentioned. The principal *māyā* is of Indra, *Indrajāla*, which is an established term for illusion itself, the *māyā* of Śaṁbara, known as *Śaṁbari-māyā*, the illusion created by Asuras, the illusion of Viṣṇu, *Vaiṣṇavi-māyā*, the illusion used by Viṣṇu as Mohinī to fool the Asuras. All these ultimately go back to the Vedic concept of *Śakrajāla* or *Indrajāla*. In the *Rigveda* itself, Indra creates the illusion of many forms by his *māyā*: *indro māyābhiḥ puru-rūpa īyate* (*Rigveda* vi, 47, 18). Elsewhere, he is described as making a snare of illusion for the entire world and fooling everyone by his *Indrajāla*, Indra's own illusion: *ayam loko jālam āśichchhakrasya mahato mahān tenāham indrajālen-āmūmstamasābhi dadhāmi sarvān* (*Atharvaveda* viii, 8, 8). In later concept, Śiva as Paśupati and the great Dancer removes the veil which blinds the *paśus*, the creatures on earth and assures them salvation. This removal of the veil, along with the assurance of salvation, are the two additional acts, apart from the primal ones of creation, protection and destruction, the *Pañchakṛitya*, symbolising the dance of Śiva. In the magnificent dance form of Śiva at Elephanta, the removal of the veil is very clearly shown. The curtain, forming the veil, removed by Śiva, holding it up in one of his four hands, is clear in the early Western Chāḷukyan sculpture from Aihole, now in the museum of the Kannada Research Institute in the Karnāṭak University at Dhārwar.

Śahasrāksha

That the great Dancer Indra in the *Rigveda* is the Śiva of later classical literature can be understood clearly by the continuous process

of fusion of ideas concerning both at different stages. *Sahasrāksha*, the Indra of a later Purāṇic concept, with a thousand eyes prominently shown on his body in medieval paintings and sculpture, is also an epithet of Rudra himself in the *Yajurveda*, *sahasrāksha śateshudhe* and *namas sahasrākshāya cha śatadhanvane cha*. In the Kushān period there is the third eye shown in the forehead of Śiva, three eyes that assure a plurality which can go with a hundred or thousand, i.e. more than two in any number suggested by the plural ending. This is along the forehead only, in the Kushān *ekamukha līṅga*, as in the Gupta period this is across the forehead like a *tilak* mark. This characteristic of the eye along the forehead is associated with Indra as his characteristic in Gupta and medieval sculptures, even in Buddhist representations of Śakka, and is a particular favourite in Nepal.

Along with the concept of *sahasrāksha* or the thousand-eyed, the all pervasive sight of myriads of eyes spread in all directions, *viśvataśchakshuḥ*, there is also in the *Rigveda* the concept of Viśvakarmā as creator closely answering Śiva's creation by the movement of eyes, heads, hands and feet: *viśvataś chakshur uta viśvato mukho viśvatobāhur uta viśvataspāt sam bāhubhyām dhamati sam patatrair dyāvābhūmī janayan deva ekaḥ* (*Rigveda* 10, 81, 3). His eyes are cast all around, faces on all sides, arms and feet in all directions, he is the sole Lord producing earth and heaven, wields them together with his arms as wings.

Paśupati

In this great concept, Indra is the lord of all, mobile and immobile : *indro yāto'vasitasya rājā* (*Rigveda* 1, 32, 15). Indra is Lord of all that moves and moves not, *charācharaguru*, as Śiva is in later thought. Bāṇa describes Śiva as the lord of mobile and immobile objects in the entire universe: *charācharagurum bhagavantam tryambakam* (*Kādambari*). Kālidāsa similarly describes him as the adorable lord of mobile and immobile objects: *mānyas sa me sthāvarajaṅgamānām* (*Raghuvamśa* 2). Not only is he called Rājā here in the *Rigveda*, but he is again Rājā in another hymn where Indra is described as the Lord of all the creatures, tame and horned, which recalls the concept of Paśupati in later literature, a special epithet of Śiva: *rājā śamasya cha śṛṅgiṇo vajrabāhuḥ* (*Rigveda* i, 32, 15). It is this epithet of Śiva that Śaṅkara specially uses in the *Śivānandalaharī*, addressing the Lord as Paśupati: *paśupate paśum mām*



sarvajña prathitakṛipayā pālaya vibho (Śivānandalahari). The idea of Śiva as Paśupati, who binds with his *pāśa* or noose all the creatures of the world, *pāśus*, and also releases them, is significant in the *pañchakṛitya* concept of Naṭarāja where he removes the veil and liberates souls. Again in this context, we have to recall the earlier concept of Indra destroying the dark enveloping Vṛitra, to release light and waters. Śiva destroys ignorance and darkness personified in Apasmāra, which he tramples as Naṭarāja and assures light through the moon, releases water as *Gaṅgāvisarjana mūrti*, for purifying souls, after sanctifying the ashes of the Sāgaras. Rājā is an epithet only symbolic of his purification of the entire universe. Sins are all removed. Evil he destroys. Light is called forth and deliverance assured. The concept of Rājā itself in the name Naṭarāja is reminiscent of the epithet for Indra, who is also a Paśupati, but is lord of the entire creation. Śiva is so anxious to help the deliverance of souls that his dance is a continuous race. He runs to speed up, and in the act, paradoxically so to say, he spreads himself out, revealing his quality of immanence. He is thus *kṛitsnavīta*. Occupying the entire universe, he runs to his devotees *kṛitsnavītāya dhāvate satvanām pataye namaḥ* (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*). The commentary explains clearly that the lord of Gaurī runs after the devotees, like the cow after the prancing calf, *vatsam gaur iva gaurīśo dhāvantaṁ anudhāvati*. This explains why Śiva is called Śiva the auspicious or even Śivatara, the zenith of Auspiciousness, *namas śivāya cha śivatarāya cha* (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*), as he alone assumes the highest bliss. Even in worldly affairs and in normal talk it is the word Śiva that is used for *Kshema* or worldly happiness. To wish one a happy journey the term is *panthānas santu te śivāḥ*. May we have a cheerful fire is expressed in terms like *pāvako asmabhyam śivo bhava*. The *Rudrādhyāya* which breathes the glory of Śiva is considered the most important in the *Veda* itself, and in it the *pañchākshara*, five letters, *namas śivāya*, and even in this the two letters Śiva, as the Bhāshya puts it.

Maddens Rishipatnīs

The immaculate concept of Śiva as the naked beggar, maddening the beautiful wives of sages, is just reversed in the story of Indra who himself, with sinful intent, approaches the most beautiful of the wives of *rishis*, Ahalyā.

Khaṭvāṅgī

The *khaṭvāṅga* is a grim club-like weapon

made of bone, skull and thigh bone, which has to be understood again in terms of an earlier weapon of bone for Indra, the *vajra*. This was made of the back bone of sage Dadhichi, who willingly gave so impossible an offering for the preparation of an unassailable weapon to protect the weal of the celestials by destroying Vṛitra. It may be noticed that the *vajra* in the hands of the earliest representations of Vajrapāṇi, who attends on Buddha in Gandhāra sculpture, as a celestial apart from Śakka, though emanated from the same concept, is made of bone, a shoulder blade, as it is indicated.

Gajāntaka

Śiva's war dance after killing Gajāśura, in the description of which the Āgama texts especially emphasise the depiction of Umā in great fear at such a ghastly sight, moving away from her Lord with baby Skanda on her hip, has to be sought in the very early reference in the *Rudrādhyāya* in the *anuvāka*: *kṛittim vasāna āchāra pinākam bibhradākāḥi vikirita vilohita namaste astu bhagavaḥ*. It is clearly to be noted that both in the Andhakāśura-saṁhāra and the Gajāntaka forms, Śiva, while dancing, combines the terrific Bhairava aspect. In fact, in most representations in north India and even in the Deccan, it is a combined composite iconographic form of *Andhakāśura-saṁhāra*, *Gajāntaka* and *Bhairava mūrtis*.

Dance with Mātrikās

Śiva dancing a wild and weird dance with the seven sisters, the *saptamātrikās*, who are mothers, is again a very early concept that survives in the dancing *mātrikās*, peculiar to certain regions as a favourite theme, in Central India, Rajasthan, U.P. and Gujarat. The idea can be traced to the *Rigveda*, where the press stones are made to dance with sisters and re-echo with their sound. They cry aloud calling Indra and dance with the sisters clasping them and re-echo the earth with their ringing sound: *bṛihad vadanti madireṇa mandinendram krośanto'vidannanā madhu samrabhyā dhīrās svasṛibhir anar-tishur āghoshayantaḥ prithivīm upadvibhiḥ* (*Rigveda* x, 94, 4). Here the stones dancing is a faint suggestion of the stone columns dancing, *sthāṇu* Śiva himself dancing with *yoni*, the other stone representing Devī, both making up the universal pair, father and mother of the universe in the Ardhanārīśvara form, which is also the favourite form of dancing Śiva, on which Śaṅkara himself has a long *stotra*, *Ardhanārīna-ṭeśa stotra*. There is a primal, almost folk, origin

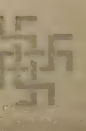




FIG. 1. *Mātṛikā dancing, rock-cut frieze, late Gupta or Vardhana, 6th century A.D., Maṇḍor, Rājasthān.*

FIG. 2. *Mātṛikās dancing, early Western Chālukya, 6th century A.D., Rāvalpāḍi cave, Mysore.*

FIG. 3. *Naṭarāja dancing with Mātṛikās, early Western Chālukya, 6th century A.D., Rāvalpāḍi cave, Aihole.*

in the dance of the sisters and Bhairava, Śiva in the woods and in the burial ground, for which a number of references are found in literature and a particularly interesting one from the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Two of the most interesting early sculptural representations of the type of dance are Śiva with the Mātṛigaṇas from Maṇḍor in Rājasthān (Fig. 1) and from Aihole, in a peculiar early Western Chālukyan rock-cut carving in Rāvalpāḍi cave (Figs. 2, 3). We know from early literature that there were special devotees of the creed of the Mātṛikās. In

the *Bṛihatsaṃhitā*, the mode of worshipping the group of mothers, *mātṛimaṇḍala*, is suggested to be done according to the instructions of those who know the details of worship: *mātṛiṇām api maṇḍalakramavido* (*Bṛihatsaṃhitā*, Chapter 59, 5, 19). Utpala in his commentary explains this, *mātṛiṇām brāhmyādīnām maṇḍalakramavido ye maṇḍalakramam pūjākramam vidanti jānanti*. In a very early drama, the *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, daily worship of the Mātṛikās and offering of a *bali* to be placed at the meeting place of four roads is very clearly stated.

NATARAJA PICTURED IN LITERATURE

Literary Description of Śiva's Form

Literature abounds in descriptions of Śiva's movement in dance. The form of Śiva himself is conceived in a picturesque fashion by poets who have tried minutely to describe every bit of Śiva's beauty from head to foot. We know that *pādādikeśāntastava* of several deities are popular in hymnal literature. In describing the movement of Śiva in dance, it is not only the limbs, the ornaments, the garments, the decorative element, but even minute details, like the juxtaposition of the stream of Gaṅgā and the skull, or the crescent moon and the snake, the third eye on the forehead, or the waving *jaṭās*, even the movements of limbs, that have all been individually described with great gusto by successive poets; and Sanskrit literature has in no small measure been enriched by the prose and poetic passages describing Śiva's dance.

Play of Colours

The classical description of Śiva's beauty, his natural fair complexion, rendered all the more white by the application of ashes (*bhasma*), with the snake ornaments gliding on his chest, neck and shoulders, creating a colourful effect of interspersed black and white, *kvachit cha kṛṣṇoragabhūṣaṇeva bhasmāṅgarāgā tanur iśvaraśya* (*Raghuvamśa* 13, 57), like garlands of white lotuses and blue lilies or a necklace of sapphires, intertwined with pearl strands, or like the clear sky with the bright cobalt blue broken up in several spots by the white autumnal clouds, simulating the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, is the most famous in Sanskrit literature. Centuries later, Ratnākara in his *Haravijaya* has chosen to depict a similar colourful theme of Śiva with his ash-smearred white form, darkened here and there, by the cuckoo-feather grey colour of serpents serving as his armlets and garlands, and thereby assuming the charm of the milky ocean with its waves tinged black by the smoke of the oceanic fire; also appearing to wear a garland of blue lotuses on his broad chest, white as the snow-clad mountain Himālaya, by the dark hue of the serpent necklace, rendered deeper still by the blue lustre of the poison, lurking in his throat: *bhasmāṅgarāgadhavalam parapushṭapichchhachchhāyāṅgadoragaphaṇākulitāmsakūṭam aurvāgnidhū-*

mamalinīkṛitavichibhaṅgadugdhormimālisadṛiṣīm śriyam āśrayantam gambhīrakaṇṭhakuharāspadakālakūṭaniryatprabhādhikamalīmasabhogihāram vakshasthalam tuhinaśailaśilāviśālam ālambinīlanalinasrag ivodvahantam (*Haravijaya* 2, 11-13).

Bāṇa has the imagery of the hermaphrodite form of Ardhanārīśvara for this effect of comingling of colours, when Kālidāsa and Ratnākara picture it in Śiva himself. Ardhanārīśvara is white with *bhasma* ashes as *aṅgarāga*, with the breast of Ambikā to the left covered with dark deer skin: *aviralabhasmāṅgarāgadhavalom mṛigājīnaprāvṛtārdho vāmastana ivāmbikāyā* (*Kādambarī*, p. 326).

Similarly, Kālidāsa's description of the dripping elephant hide, encircling him as it were in the evening, with a rich red glow, is presented again with a greater note of fancy by Ratnākara who would have it that the hide dripping red blood tinges not only Śiva's head but also the row of teeth and the skull cap adorning his *jaṭās*, as it is stained by the red of *tāmbula*: *stamberamājīnagalatkshatajāvasekasampāditāruṇaruchā kvachiduttamāṅge tāmbūlarāgaparipāṭalayeiva dantapaṅktyā virājītakirīṭakapālakhaṇḍam* (*Haravijaya* 2, 7).

Blend of Iconographic Forms

In the form of Naṭarāja, it is very interesting to know the blending of certain features of other iconographic forms of the deity. Gaṅgā on the *jaṭā*, nestling as a mermaid, recalls Gaṅgādhara, while the prominent moon, occasionally shown on the *jaṭā*, proclaims his aspect as Chandraśekhara. The ear ornaments, different on either lobe, or present only on one, when it is a spiral, usual for feminine adornment, suggest the eternal Ardhanārīśvara. A special noteworthy feature in the case of Naṭarāja is the decoration of his *jaṭās* with peacock feathers, at once recalling the Kirāta theme, in which form Śiva appeared before Arjuna. Ratnākara fancies this decoration of Śiva in his dancing form as his assuming in part the hunter's guise, along with Devī, with a special pleasure in looking at this form of hers: *kaṇṇāvatamsitaśikhāṇḍipatattrakhaṇḍam guṇjāphalasragupagūḍhapayodharāgrām yasyekshītum girisutām adhikābhi-*

*rāmarūpām nigūḍham udakaṇṭhata sāgni chakshuḥ
yasya vyabhidhata manas sutarām kirātārūpasya
śailasutayā śabarībhavantyā karṇāvatamsitamanoha-
rakekīpichchhasachchhāyadīrghataralochanaśaṅkupāta-
iaḥ (Haravijaya 1, 56-57).*

The Third Eye

The third eye of Śiva, which, in all cases except the Madanāntaka form, is shown closed, though suggestive here of the Madanāntaka aspect, also draws attention to the fact that the sweet sidelong glances of Devī, watching his dance, rejuvenate Cupid, burnt by the fiery glow of Śiva's look. If Damodaragupta categorically claims the side-long looks of love of pleasing damsels as the abode of Cupid, the bee caressing the lotus face of Rati: *sa jayati saṅkalpabhavo ratimukhaśatapatrachumbanabhramarah yasyānukūlalalanānayanāntavilochanam vasa-tiḥ (Kūṭṭānīmata 1)*, Ratnākara would have the glances of lovely damsels, with the eyebrows arched in dance, as a fresh abode chosen by the god of love. As Ratnākara has it, on the one side Śiva's burning look destroys the form of Cupid, while the side-long sweet glances of women hold out a new abode: *ūrdhvekshaṇānala-śikhāpāṭalendhanatvam āsādyā yasya kupitasya samā-dhībhaṅgāt chakre padam makaraketur apāṅga eva sabhrūvilāsalaḍite laṭabhāṅganānām (Hāravijaya 1.54)*. This is a veiled suggestion of *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, as it would appear that it is Devī's glances that rejuvenate Kāma, as it were.

Ratnākara is so fond of this idea that eulogising Śiva as the destroyer and the benign in one, repeats the fancy of Kāma destroyed and rejuvenated, Śiva's anger and grace for Kāma resulting in his getting burnt but finding an abode of delight in the pool of grace of feminine limbs: *dagdhesya kāme nayanāgninettham krodhaḥ prasādas cha tathā jajrīmbe aṅgeshu lāvānyasudhā-hradeshu yathā sa lebhe padam aṅganānām (Hāravijaya 9, 65)*.

Ratnākara very thoughtfully gives two versions of a cause and effect real or fancied, which point again to the Ardhanārīśvara concept. Śiva's ornament on his head, the snake, helps by his hiss to aggravate the flame of his third eye, to increase the masculine aspect of Śiva, who destroyed Madana through the fire of his third eye: *phlūshyatpuratrayam aviślathajūṭabandhakhedākulena phaṇinā sphuraduddhatār-chiḥ sāhāyakārtham iva phūtkṛitamārutena samdhuk-shitas sapadi yasya prishatkavahniḥ (Haravijaya 1.36)*, while the Ganges stream on his head, appearing like the moon melting and dripping

on the fire, suggests the extinguishing of the flame of the third eye, in which act, the feminine aspect of Devī, rejuvenating by her tenderness, grace and spiritual beauty, the potency of Cupid, re-assures his existence, as elsewhere also clearly indicated by Ratnākara: *mandākinī śirasi maulikāpālāpattasamghaṭṭajarjaratarāṅgagha-ṭā vibhāti yasyordhvanetraśikhiviplutachandrakhaṇ-ḍavishyandamānaśīrāmṛitanirjharasīḥ (Haravijaya 1.38)*.

The poetic fancy of the sweet-tongued poet Mūka, who according to legend, burst into poetry at the sight of the maddening beauty of passion-eyed Kāmākshī, pictures a fertile moistened area of love in the eyes of the goddess to rejuvenate Kāma. Cupid, the essence of the seed of passion, scorched by the eye of Śiva, has a large field wet with the water of love, to rejuvenate him, as it were, in her singularly charming glances: *śrikāmakoti śivalochanaśoshita-sya śṛṅgārabijavibhavasya punaḥ prarohe premāmbhasārdram achirāt prachureṇa śaṅke kedāram amba-tava kevaladrishṭipātam (Mūkapañchaśatī, iv; kaṭāk-shaśataka, 19)*.

The entire credit for rejuvenating Kāma, however, is given to Śiva by Śūdraka, who as an antithesis to the earlier described poetic fancy, has Rudra himself characterised as the most tender-hearted; and by Rudra out of anger or, more correctly, out of his grace, Kāma, the very coquettish charm of women, was rendered more beautiful of form: *jayati bhagavān sa rudraḥ kopād atha vāpyanugrahād yena striṇām vilāsamūrtiḥ kāntataravapuḥ kṛitaḥ kāmāḥ (Padmaṇḍābhṛitaka 1)*.

The third eye of Śiva, however, in its closed state, is beautiful, almost looking the shape of a lotus bud, in the fair form of Śiva, white like the lily. The poet fancies it may be the lotus eye of Puṇḍarikāksha Viṣṇu himself, fallen from the crest of Śiva, where it was worshipfully placed by Viṣṇu, before he was blessed by Śiva in his form as Viṣṇvanugrahamūrti: *ajjavi kusumikaya-kesavachchhi-vattamva tai achchhim (Gauḍavāho, 37)*.

Sometimes the third eye of Śiva is omitted in the delineation, to give a greater charm of a forehead left free and uncluttered by the modelling of the eyebrow, the lids, the lashes and a peeping pupil. It may be that there is greater aesthetic charm in avoiding this, particularly in the Kushāṇa period, where the eye is along the forehead and not across. Even

when it is across, the third eye was sometimes got covered up by emperors of great taste like Rājārāja and Rājendra, who had thought it best to fix the largest emerald, sapphire or ruby, which they obtained as war-trophy as the fittest adornment for the dancing lord at Chidambaram, like another similar great gem for Somāskanda at Tiruvārūr. In such a case, the remark of Ratnākara that Śiva's third eye had gone out of the forehead to start examining whether the union of the two parts of Ardhanārīśvara is complete, would be a very meaningful interpretation: *śliṣṭonayoḥ kimu bhaved uta naiva samdhir dehārdhayor ghaṭitayor iti tat-parikshām āriṣu yasya rabhasād iva chakshur ardhannārīśvarasya niriṣyā lalāṭapaṭṭāt* (Haravijaya 1, 62).

Ardhanārīśvara Aspect

The beauty of Śiva's face is the charm derived by it mainly from the moon-like glory of the Devī half of Ardhanārīśvara. Śaṅkara's line, *śivaḥ śaktyā yukto yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavitum*, is not only in regard to the power for physical movement, but also for his entire glory and majesty, including his personal beauty and charm. Śiva, the auspicious, is auspicious by the Devī half, as otherwise he is *ghora* and *ghoratara*. It is the glory of this face mainly contributed by the charm of Devī's, more lovely than the full moon, that creates despondency in the crescent moon on the *jaṭās* of Śiva, who, finding he is no equal to the full charm of Devī's face, appears as if intent on entering the fire of the third eye of Śiva by his close proximity to it. This is how Ratnākara imagines and finds an explanation for the proximity of the crescent moon to the third eye of Śiva: *śailāt-majāvanachandramasaḥ katham nu lekhāpi me na sadriṣi śaśinā saśokam ūrdhvekshaṇotthaśikhinīva nipitsunettham adhyāsinonnatalalāṭataṭopakaṇṭham* (Haravijaya 2, 6).

Dharmapāla has a telling explanation for the eternal crescent shape of the moon, that refuses to grow as long as it adorns the crest of Śiva. This, again, is the glory of Gaurī's face moon, whose charm puts to shame the lunar arc: *sa pātu viśvam adyāpi yasya mūrdhni navas śaśi gaurimukhatiraskāralajjaye va na vardhate* (Sūbhāshitaratnakośa 4, 35).

The Gaṅgādhara form occurs in medieval sculpture in Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram and other later monuments, clearly indicating, not only the slight despondency of Pārvatī, seen in earlier form of the deity as from the Vākā-

ṭaka cave at Elephantā, but a positively aggressive anger, that requires great effort by Śiva to console and appease. There is not only sculptural but also pictorial representation, most interesting, to illustrate this theme. But in the form of Śiva dancing, Devī beside him, in whose glory the dance itself commences, as we see in the *pradoshastava* or in the very concept of Śivakāmasundarī, the goddess who excites the highest love sublime in Śiva, here, more than elsewhere, is a justification for the stream of Gaṅgā to be vexed with her lot as a co-wife. Ratnākara, therefore, imagines that out of spite for Devī, Gaṅgā appears almost rushing back to heaven in the guise of the rays of the dazzling gems on the hoods of the snake crawling up on the *jaṭās* of Śiva: *ābhāti yasya himaśailasutābhyasūyaroshānubandhavaśato'mbaramā-rurukshuḥ ushnīshapannaganipīḍitajūtaratnabhāgot-thitā pratipathābhimukhīva gaṅgā* (Haravijaya 1, 40).

There is also another reason for this spite, as Pārvatī, in the words of Kālidāsa, had obtained a glory far beyond the benediction of those who blessed her on her bridal eve to captivate completely her husband, by wresting from him one half of his body as her own, and herself commingling in his physical frame: *akhaṇḍitam prema labhasva patyur ityuchyate tābhīr umā sma namrā tayā tu tasyārdhaśarīrabhājā paśchātkrītās snigdhajanāśishopi* (Kumārasambhava 7, 28).

The fancy of Ratnākara in the case of the dance of Ardhanārīśvara goes one step further and by pure pun of words, he achieves the paronomasia, which, in the case of Śiva, i.e. the Śiva half, as twilight, summons the glow of dance festivity, and in the case of the goddess, the union of the halves causes a spurt of joy, the snake serving as the waist-band for Śiva, the most precious waist-band adorning Pārvatī, Śiva's face marked by picturesque eyes and Pārvatī's with joyous and beautiful ones, Śiva marked by the precious moon digit, Pārvatī by the garment of the highest worth: *sandhyā-hitotsavavikāsam ahīnakāñchidāmābhīrāmam anīśam vikaṭākshavaktram lakshmīm anuttamahimām-sukalāñchhitam sad āviśhakāra śivayor vapur ityābhinnam* (Haravijaya 21, 55).

It is interesting to compare this with the dance of Ardhanārīśvara in the form of *Kālāntaka* (Fig. 1), referred to by Nilakaṇṭha Dīkshita, where he asks Devī to take credit for destroying the very idea of destruction, thereby establish-

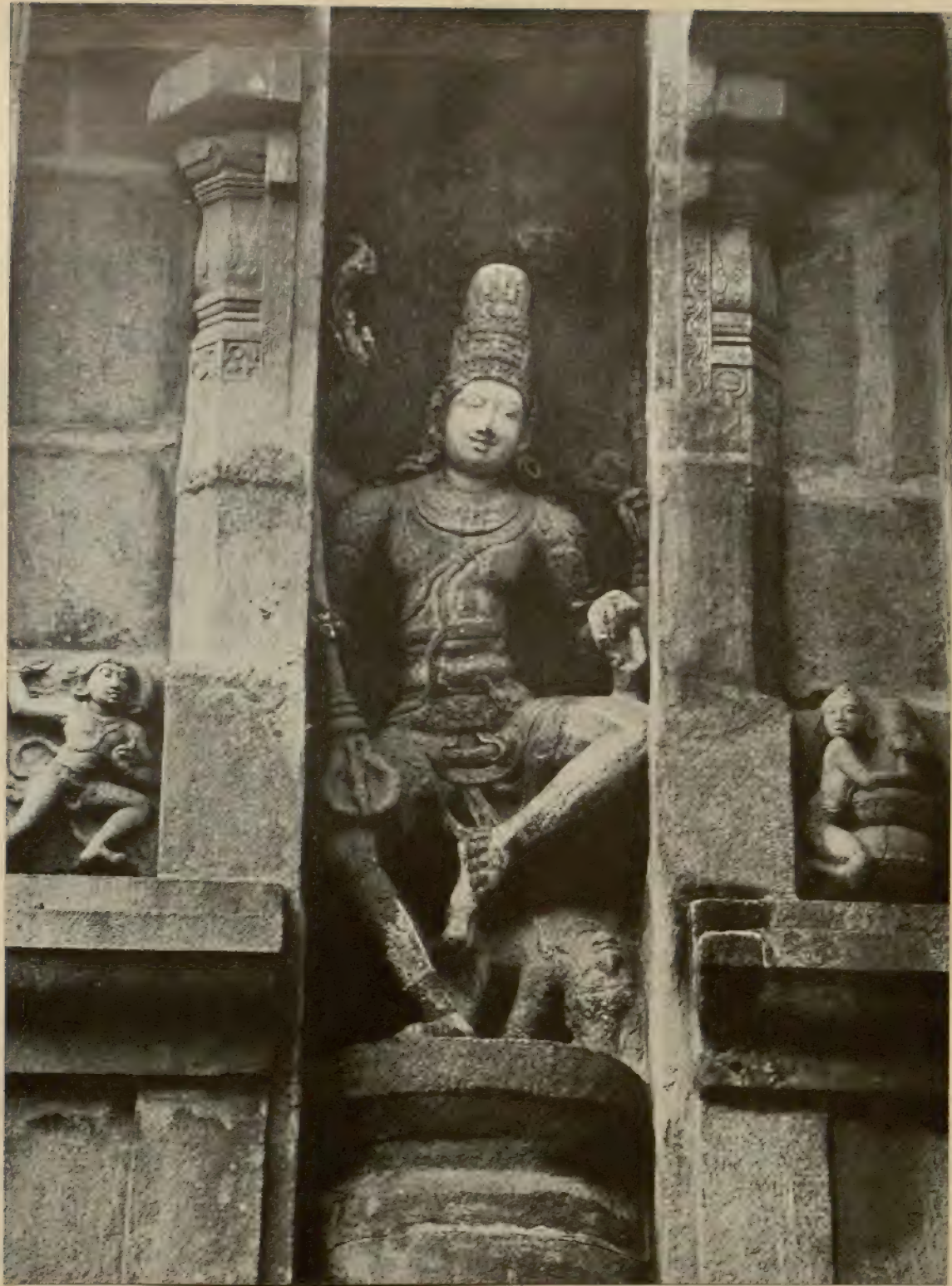


FIG. 1. Kālāntaka, early Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brhadīśvara temple, Tanjāvūr.

ing creation. It is in the *lāśya* of Devī for creation that death is annihilated and turned into transformation and rejuvenation, rebirth, creation. Let Śiva take credit for the simple victory of his over Cupid by burning him with his third eye from the forehead, but it is you alone, O Mother ! that with the leg to the left destroyed death, *Kāla*. In this the conqueror of Tripuras can have no share: *sādhāraṇe smara-jaye nītilākshīśādhye bhāgī śivo bhavatu nāma yaśas*

samagram vāmāṅghrimātrakalite janani tvadiye ko vā prasaktir iha kālajaye purāreḥ (*Ānandasāgarastava*, 56).

The beautiful form of Ardhanārīśvara is indeed such a combination of fearful valour and pleasant grace that it takes time even for the Devas to understand how Śiva, who is eternally Ardhanārīśvara, and particularly so in his *ālīḍha* stance as the Destroyer of the Tripuras,



FIG. 2. *Tripurāntaka* burning up by flames the *Tripuras* who are confused, 8th century A.D., Early Western Chālukya, Pāpanāśa temple, Pattadakal.

would be able to achieve the impossible by wielding the bow (Fig. 2). Even before the Devas could determine in their puzzled state as to how the hand of Devī, soft like the lotus bud, would hold the bow in *mushti*, or how the left leg, decorated with the jingling anklet, would pose the warrior stance of *pratyālīḍha*, the fire from the arrow of Dhūrjaṭi Śiva burnt out the Asuras, during the quelling of the three brazen castles, miraculously created by Maya for the *Tripuras*: *chāpam mushṭir bhavānyās sarasijamukulaśriḥ katham vā vidhatte pratyālīḍham katham vā rachayatu maṇimannūpuro vāmapādaḥ ittham yāvad utarkam vidadhati vibudhās tāvad agre ya āsīt bāṇāgniḥ plusṭadaityo mayapuramathane dhūrjaṭes sovatād vaḥ* (*Saduktikarnāmṛita* 80).

Śiva's dance as Ardhanārīśvara so inspires Ratnākara, that he takes the jingling anklet of the Pārvatī half in dance as the utterance of a blessing on the coming together of the two

halves: *parasparapremaviḥṛimbhito' nayoḥ chirāya yogo'stu śarīrabhāgayoḥ dadhau tulākoṭikaśiñjītachchhalād itīva gaurīcharaṇas tadāśisham* (*Haravijaya* 21, 52). It is the raised leg of Devī that is meant. The foot on the ground of the masculine half of the body, however, has the snake Śeṣha as the anklet, which, again the poet fancies, out of fear that Śiva may jump on his head and crush to powder his jewelled hood, thought it wiser to coil himself on his foot to form the anklet as it were: *nṛityatparikramabharānatabhūmipīṭhanishpīṣṭaratnaśīrasam khalu mā kṛithā mām bhasmavadāta iti śeṣha ivendumauler bhogī babhau kaṭakitas charaṇāgralagnaḥ* (*Haravijaya* 21, 53).

The fact that Śiva alone was capable of *lāsya* and *kaiśikīvṛitti*, which is more the sphere of women, is because he alone is eternally Ardhanārīśvara; and as Kālidāsa has clearly stated *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava* are the two halves made up by Śiva and Pārvatī. The dance exhibiting simple tastefully arranged dress, with music and movement to suggest feminine grace and *śṛiṅgāra* is *kaiśikī vṛitti*. This dance gait, maddening the heart of the lover described by Ratnākara in a damsel, *nepathye masīṇamano-rame kṛitāsthā śṛiṅgārāñchitarasāśālitām vohantī kāntasya pramadam udāranṛittalilā rambhorūr atanuta kaiśikīva vṛittih* (*Haravijaya* 17, 79), would equally apply to the Devī-half of Ardhanārīśvara. We cannot but imagine the movement of brows and the eyes (glances) and the *rechaka* of the neck to suggest an emotional stir. These *rechakas*, significant in dance, *spasṭākshibhruvavikṛitiprapaṇchaśobhī śṛiṅgārākṛitipiśūno vipakshavāmaḥ sagrivānirupamarechako jajrimbhe rambhorvā dayitavilokanena hāvaḥ* (*Haravijaya* 17, 77), have their source in Śiva's as the supreme dancer.

Śambhu, who as Ardhanārīśvara has his beloved spouse engrafted in his body, carefully watches through his glances the movements of his hands in their appropriate positions, as he holds to his left the delicate *lāsya*, beautified by the glory of gesticulation of emotions, the other half, to the right, the rhythm of the more powerful *tāṇḍava* to the deep note of the *ḍamaru* hand drum: *vāme bhāvābhīnayasushamālāṅkṛitām lāsyaḥhaṅgīm ardhenyasmin uditadamarum bibhratas tāṇḍavam cha svasvakshetravyavahṛitakarālokadat-tāvadhānās śambhoḥ kāntākalitavapusho dṛiṣṭayāḥ pāntu yushmān* (*Nṛittaratnāvalī* I, 2).

In the *Bṛihatkathāmañjarī*, Kshemendra puts it in the mouth of Śiva that *Anaṅga* was made limbless, *apāṅga*, by the blaze of his angry look,



FIG. 3. *Ardhanārīśvara* dancing with one foot on the bull and another on the lion, terracotta, 13th century A.D., Rani Pokri, Kāshīmandu, Nepal.

but, however, got his dwelling in feminine glances. The feminine glances are not, however, the limb of an ordinary woman, but the consort of Śiva himself, Śivakāmasundarī, who alone could kindle *kāma* again in the heart of even Smarahara: *tad akāri mama krodhād atha lochanavahninā aṅganāpāṅgavasatir yenāpāṅgo' bhavāt smarati* (*Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, p. 4, 44).

The *daṇḍapāda* of Devī in dance, destroying the cycle of births, a punishment for sins committed, appears charming with the moon digit in its vicinity, creating the illusion of a split anklet: *sa daṇḍapādo bhavadāṇḍapātām utkhaṇḍayan rakshatu chaṇḍikāyāḥ yasyendulekhā puratas sphuranti trutyattulākotiṭulām upaiti* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* I, 19).

As Pārvatī dances, her *daṇḍapāda* attracts, by the tinkling, a fleet of swans, vehicles of Brahmā, which disturb his trance: *ūrdhvāṇḍādayupari paritah prodgatas tāṇḍavesu premoṭkarsham rachayatu satām chaṇḍikādaṇḍapādah yanmañjira-*

dhvananakalayākṛishyamānā japastham brahmānam drāg vahanavihagās samvidās chālayanti (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita*, I, 46).

The *daṇḍapāda* of Śiva is equally interesting to poetic imagination. Mañkha describes it as a wonderful bridge over celestial and terrestrial spheres, including the vast expanse of the ocean, making the stars appear drops of perspiration, due to the great fatigue in traversing so great a distance in his great festivity of dance: *nṛittotsave sphurati yasya cha daṇḍapādo yasmin gate gaganasāgarasetumudrām durādhvalaṅghana-ghanaśramavāribinduṇḍaprathām chiram udūni kaṭākshayanti* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* 5, 18).

Ratnākara himself has a very interesting description of the *daṇḍapāda* of Śiva. But this is in the terrific whirl of his dance, where mountains are tossed about. The *daṇḍapāda* of Śiva, raised in the dance rendering of a theme, with the evening lunar crescent touching his ankle and cut by the sharp edge of mountains tossed about, appears a jewelled anklet settled on it: *yasyānukārarabhasotthitadāṇḍapādagulphāgrasamghaṭitamaṇḍalapūrvarekhaḥ paryastaparvatasitāśriviśīryamānamāṇikyapādakaṭakaśriyam eti chandraḥ* (*Haravijaya* 1, 45).

The dance of *Ardhanārīśvara*, with one foot on the bull and the other on the lion, the ground picturesquely strewn with pearls from the claws of the lion and the gold pieces from the ornamental trappings of the bull, as Mañkha would have it, is interesting: *sapṛītim cha kutūhalam cha jagatām puṣhpātu yasya svayam vāmārdhakramanotsavo girijayā yatra kṣaṇam jāyate sambhinnobhayavāhanāgrimakhuranyāsakriyānissaranmuktādanturajātārūpaviṣulālāmākāravatyurvarā* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* 5, 50). That in Nepal, the country adjacent to Kashmir, the seat of Mañkha, this has endured in sculptural tradition and *Ardhanārīśvara* dancing with one foot on either of the vehicles, is a favourite, is noteworthy (Fig. 3).

Mañkha fancies that as *Ardhanārīśvara* gyrates with the nuances of dance, all excellently portrayed by Śiva and Pārvatī rolled into one, the fatigued reptile ornaments to the right expand their hoods to drink up the sweet breath from the tired and drooping left half: *dehadvandvaikaśesham samam avanibhṛitah kanyayā nirmimāṇo yastam śastam prayunkte pratirajanimukham nātyalilārahasyam śramyanto dakṣiṇārdhābharanaphaṇabhṛito yatra phullatphaṇāgram klāmya dvāmārdhaniryatsurabhimukhamarutpānagoshīḥim jushante* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* 5, 57).

That the violent dance of Śiva tires even the mighty snakes, like Śeṣha that form his jewels is repeated by other poets also. Dhūrjati's *tāṇḍava* so tires the snake, that in sheer fatigue, the hoods twitch, and effortlessly issue from their gems light that creates the illusion of sunlight, gladdening the pairs of *chakravāka* birds on the heavenly stream Gaṅgā, as simultaneously blood-red pairs of *chakora* birds run towards the perfume of lotus stalks, shot into bloom by the arrowy rays of the unagitated crest moon peeping from cloud borders: *pāyād āyāsakhedak-shubhitaphaṇīphaṇāratnanirayatnaniriyachchhāyāmāyā-pataṅgadyutimuditaviyadvāhinīchakravākam abhrāntabhrāntachūḍātuhinakarakarānīkanālīkanālachchedāmodānudhāvadrudhiram iva khage dhūrjaṭes tāṇḍavam vaḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, p. 10, 157).

It is again to this whirlwind motion in dance that is but a sport to Śiva, but that fatigues the snakes adorning him, that Subandhu alludes, when, by a play on words, he describes Paśupati's *tāṇḍava* dance, which make the snake ornaments quiver: *paśupatitāṇḍavalilām ivollasachchakshuśśravasam* (*Vāsavadattā* (63) p. 61 tr. and p. 152 text).

A picturesque description of Ardhanārīśvara is given in a verse attributed to Rājaśekhara, where the doubt caused in the mind of the child Skanda, compels him to move away from a strange combination of one half of the familiar form of his father and another equally well known half of the body of his mother, making him reflect 'This is mother ! Oh it is not mother ! There is no stubby growth on a half of her face ! This is father ! Oh, it is not father ! I have never seen here a breast on his chest ! Who is she anyway ! Oh who is he ! Is it a woman or a man ! What other third beyond these can this object be ?' *ambeyam neyam ambā na hi kharakapiśam śmaśru tasyā mukhāgre tātoyam naisha tātas stanam urasi pītur dṛiṣṭavān nāham atra keyam koyam kim etad yuvatir atha pumān vastu kim syāt tritīyam śambhoḥ samvikshya rūpād āpasarati guhas śaṅkitāḥ pātu yushmān* (*Subhāshitaratnakōśa* 5, 20).

An eleventh century carving of dancing Ardhanārīśvara from the Chandella region (Fig. 4), from the collection of Niraj Jain at Satpā, and now in the National Museum, clearly represents these peculiar characteristics. The beard and moustache covering one half of the face leaving the other smooth and the breast indicating the feminine left half are more tel-



FIG. 4. Ardhanārīśvara dancing, Chandella, 11th century A.D., from near Satpā, probably from Khajurāho itself, National Museum.

ling than the rest of the indication in attire and ornamental decoration. Medieval sculpture, whether Chandella or Haihaya, Paramāra or Chālukya, prominently represents curly whiskers on the cheeks of Śiva as Bhairava or Andhakāri and distinguish the masculine half of Ardhanārīśvara by giving this prominence to a stubby growth on one half of the hermaphrodite form.

Another picture of the dance of Ardhanārīśvara, as Śiva's *tāṇḍava* aspect of dance dominating over the *lāsya* half of Pārvatī, is given in a verse attributed to Bāṇa, where the Lord's refined dance movements are described, lifting

up his head heavenwards, while the feet tread down the earth and leave heaven untouched, making joyous bands of celestials, headed by Brahmā, chant his praise, and even as frightened Pārvatī moves away from him, he is not quit by her, as the dexter part of the body is bound together with the other half: *maulāu vegād udañchatyapi charaṇabharanyañchad urvitalatvād akshuṇṇasvargalokasthitimuditasurajyeshthago-shthīstutāya, santrāsānnissarantyāpyaviratavisarad-dakshinārdhānubandhād atyaktāyādriputryā tri-purahara jagatkleśahantre namaste* (Subhāshitaratna-kośa 4, 27).

While Devī is so closely knit with Śiva in his hermaphrodite form, making it impossible for her to move away from him, even when frightened by his wild leaps in *tāṇḍava*, there are other moments, when by herself as a witness of his dance, she could tease Śiva in *prapaṇyakalaha* (loving quarrels), pretending to be offended. The poet Utprekshāvallabha fancies that the goddess of Twilight is indeed most fortunate, at the very sight of the approach of whom the wielder of the *pināka* bow (Śiva) joyously loosens the knots of his decorated cluster of *jaṭās*, and, in the presence of Devī herself, starts dancing wildly without the least restraint: *dhanyā hi sā bhagavatī divasāntasandhyā yām āgatām bhuvī suvik-shya pinākapāṇiḥ viśliṣṭabandhanajaṭābharāṇas sa harshād gauryaś samaksham api nrītyati vītaśaṅkaḥ* (Bhikṣhāṇakāvya 31, 15).

There are many verses that record the consequences of such a tactless act of Śiva at the sight of *sandhyā*. For Devī, it is a special excitement, where so much regard and often even salutation to *sandhyā* is offered by Śiva. Sometimes it starts a wordy warfare and Śiva tries to explain and escape attention by playing on words. An example is a verse of Ratnākara. Śiva tries to explain that Vijayā, the maid of Pārvatī, who knows all about musical rhythm, sings a song at high and low pitch for his dance. But Devī would interpret it as a sacrifice for Indra. *akhaṇḍa-laya-jñā*, i.e. fully conversant with rhythm is different from *ākhaṇḍala-yajñā*, i.e. sacrifice for Indra. This undoubtedly shows how like the Pramathagaṇas who take part in the dance of Śiva, the companions of Devī, like Vijayā, also swell the orchestral music of Śiva: *spashtākhaṇḍalayaajñayā vijayayā nrītye mamochchā-vacham gītam sundarī tanvate surapater yogo makha-syātra kaḥ kasyeshṭhā savasamkathā sphuṭam asau yah pānaśaunḍo naras sūktyā khaṇḍitapārvatīvachana ityavyād vṛishāṅko jagat* (Vakrokti-pañchāśikā 44).

In the context of such domestic ruffles, the explanation for the form of the Ardhanārīśvara itself is fancifully conceived to be an expression of Devī's impatience to curb Śiva. Unable to bear the presence of Gaṅgā on the *jaṭās* of Śiva Devī makes herself half of Śiva's body to have a greater control over him and feels satisfied he cannot now flirt: *mūrdhasthitābhrasaritokshama-yeva śambhor ardhāṅgam aṅgaghaṭanādghanamāśra-yanti dṛiṣṭvātmanāthavaśatām sakalāṅgatusṭhā pushtim nagendratanayā bhavatām vidadhyāt* (Epigraph. Ind. I, p. 234).

Āhārya

There are four aspects of dance, *āṅgika*, *āhārya*, *vāchika* and *sāttvika*. The effect of a combination of these four is so great that Dāmodaragupta describes it as the most potent force in an accomplished courtesan to completely lure and impoverish millionaires: *gaṇikābhinaya-chatusṭayam ākṛiṣṭyai svāpateyapushṭānām* (Kuṭ-ṭānīmata, 634). All these four, that attain a sublimity in Śiva's dance, are described in literature. The delineation of this *āhārya abhinaya*, Śiva's costuming himself, is indeed effective. His natural adornment is sometimes so lovely that there is no need for special adornment. Very telling indeed is the query of Kālidāsa, *kim iva hi madhurāṇām maṇḍanam nākrītinām*, what is not an adornment to comely form? The poet Halāyudha describes Śiva's natural adornment. With his lovely eye that vies with the *tilaka* mark of musk, that enhances his beauty, the celestial stream trailing on his crest, like a garland of *mālātī* flowers, the poison on his throat simulating the appearance of painted design in musk, most praiseworthy is the naturally unadorned adornment of Śiva: *dhatte śobhām ghusṛiṇatīlakasparddhi chakshur lalāṭe mau-lau lagnā tridaśataṇī mālatīmālikeva kshveḍam krīḍāmṛigamadamayī patralekheva kaṇṭhe ślāghyas śambho sphurati sahaṇaḥ ko'pi bhushāvidhis te* (Epigraph. Ind. 25, p. 176).

His third eye, though a blazing one that destroys the universe at the time of deluge, is nevertheless charming not only like a *tilaka* streak, but, since it is almost closed to save the world from a conflagration, its charm lies more in the eyebrow, which is like the burnt bow of Kāma, the dark streak simulating this appearance, as Vākpati would have it. The eye, open with its rolling red pupil burning up the final offering of the universe as an oblation, is only for destruction (Gauḍavāho 41). In this context, he appropriately uses the word *Pinākī* for Śiva, as the one who carries the bow *pināka*.

But as the fire from the third eye is more deadly than even his bow, the use of this word is most appropriate, as it suggests that his eye itself, with flame darting from it, is almost a bow. With his eye closed, the charming arched brow over it suggests the lovely curve of Kāma's bow: *so jayayi jassa nādāla-loyaṇasaṅgiṇī bhumayalehā ajjāvi disayi kāmassa dāha-kasaṇā dhaṇu-layavva* (*Gauḍavāho* 29), (*sa jayati yasya lalāṭalochana-saṅgiṇī bhrūlekhā adyāpi dṛiṣyate kāmasya dāhakṛishṇā dhanurlateva*).

But a dancer has to dress himself up appropriately for the dance. The attire should not be too elaborate and it should be appropriate. The propriety of dress is mentioned in the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *viralanepathya*, transparent and minimum attire to better reveal the dancer's features and limbs.

In the description of Naṭarāja in dance, the Śilpa text ordains that the *tripuṇḍra* mark, the sacred ashes smeared with the three fingers along the forehead, should be prominent. This is symbolic of *trisatya*, the triple form of truth. Bāṇa describes the *tripuṇḍra* adornment on the forehead as *trisatya*, three-fold form of truth in thought, word and deed, *manovākkāyalakṣhaṇa*: *lalāṭapaṭṭake trisatyeneva bhasmatripuṇḍra kenālaṅkṛitaḥ* (*Kādambarī*, p. 72).

Elsewhere, this mark of the sacred ashes on the forehead is explained by Bāṇa as three flags of victory, as it were, signifying the conquests of the three worlds by penance and asceticism: *tapobalanirjitatribhuvanajayapatākābhīr iva tisṛibhīr bhasmapuṇḍrakarājibhīr virājitalalāṭajirā* (*Harshacharita* I, p. 3).

His white and immaculate form gives the impression of Śiva as the ocean of milk, the moving hands looking like waves. The Gaṅgā on Śiva's head is like the silken turban. Śiva, the Lord of the mountain Sumeru itself, wears his insignia of royalty in the form of this *ushṇīsha* or turban: *amśukoshṇīshapaṭṭikām iva sumerunripasya* (*Harshacharita* I, p. 8).

Elsewhere Bāṇa describes the white streams of Gaṅgā as a *mālatīmālā*, a garland of *mālatī* flowers adorning Śiva's head: *andhakamathanamaulimālatīmālikām* (*Harshacharita* I, p. 7).

His eight visible forms composing the vital elements of the universe are represented by eight flowers offered in worship and lovingly worn by him. The flowers are *baka*, *droṇa*, *dur-*

dhura, *sumanā*, *pāṭalā*, *padma*, *utpala* and *gosūrya*. These are collectively known as *aṣṭapushpikā* mentioned by Bāṇa: *avanipavanavanagaganadahanatapanatuhinakiraṇayajamānamayir mūrtir aṣṭāvapi dhyāyanti suchīram aṣṭapushpikām adāt* (*Harshacharita* I, p. 8).

In the representation of Śiva in dance, the tied up portion of the *jaṭā* is adorned by one prominent flower at least symbolising all the eight or *aṣṭapushpikā*, and this is the *durdhura*.

Gaṅgā, shown usually on Śiva's *jaṭās* as he dances, is a mermaid, the lower part of the body undefined and almost looking formless, like a tapering wavy mass. Bāṇa imagines that the lower part of Gaṅgā suggests her limbs wayward by her fall on Śiva's head: *paramēśvarottamāṅgapātadurlalitāṅgām gaṅgām iva* (*Harshacharita* 8, p. 77).

There is nothing more charming than the moon which is the crest adornment of Śiva. Śiva's crescent moon far surpasses the glory of all the wealth of the world. This is Bāṇa's appraisal of the most beautiful item of jewellery of Śiva: *abhibhūtasakalabhuvanabhūṣaṇabhūtiprabhāvām aiśānīm iva śaśikalām* (*Harshacharita* 8, p. 83). The poet Trivikrama feels that the crescent moon is a suggestion of increasing effulgence: *chandrakaleva kalāpraveśenopachīyamānaprabhā* (*Nalachampū* 3, p. 199).

The peacock feathers, usually associated with the *jaṭā* adornment of Naṭarāja, suggest the *Kirāta* form and also the folk element, or the *deśī* part of *nāṭya*, which emanates from the classical, or which is refined and ultimately absorbed in the classical type.

The overall effect of the decoration of the locks of Śiva is represented by Daṇḍī by visualising a picturesque effect. Somewhere it is the silvery stream of the heavenly river, somewhere else it is the white gleaming skull, elsewhere the moving snakes, and towards the end it is the charming streak of the crescent moon; with such impossible ornaments the forest of *jaṭās* of the Lord of the Pramathagaṇas displays an artistic complex: *kvachid amarasarit kvachit kapālam kvachid uragāḥ kvachid aindavī cha lekḥā iti viśhamavibhūṣaṇair upetā pramathapater avatājjaṭāṭavī vaḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 58).

The gleam and sparkle of the jewels, almost sporting a dance, is sung by Naṭagaṅga. The heavenly stream is not only an ornament for

Śiva's head, but is also a sporting dancer assuming different guises, with her drops gleaming as pearls in the hollows of the oysterlike skulls, bright like the white jasmine on the creeper-like *jaṭās*, flickering like parched rice in the vicinity of the fire from the eye, sparkling gem-like on the hoods of the snake, and all of them together dancing in one series of rollicking waves, swelling and subsiding: *muktābhā nṛika-pālasūktishu jaṭāvallishu mallinibhā vahnau lājanibhā dṛiṣor maṇinibhā bhogotkare bhoginaḥ nṛityā-vartaparampareritapayas sammūrchchhanochchhālītāḥ khelante haramūrdhni pāntu bhavato gaṅgāpayobindavaḥ* (*Saduktikarnāmṛita* 50).

The *patrakuṇḍala* on only one ear suggests the Ardhanārīśvara type, with the other lobe, either free or with the *makara* type of *kuṇḍala*.

The three strands of sacred thread are held by Trivikrama to portray the glory of the three *yugas* seeking protection methinks from the fourth, Kali, as, in the form of three threads clinging to his body, or like the three strands of amulets provided by the Trinity, taking shape as the strands of the sacred thread, they signify their oneness: *kalikālakalaṅkaśaṅkāśaraṇāgatais tribhiḥ puṇyayugair iva susūtribhūya dehalagnais tripushkarasnanāvasaravilagnasarasabisakāṇḍakuṇḍalair iva bhaktyārādhitatripurusharachitarakshāsūkshmarekhānukāribhis sitayajñopavitatatantubhir bhūshitadehaḥ* (*Nalachampū* 3, p. 144).

Śiva's own immaculate form has a lustre of its own which is only dimmed by being lit-up by the light of the lunar crescent on his *jaṭās* as Vākpāti has it: *mauḍuchchhaṅgapariggaha-miyaṅka-jophāvabhāsiṇo ṇamaha nichchanchiṇya pasu-vaiṇo pariṭṭhiyam vāmaṇachchhāyam* (*Gauḍavāho* 33) (*makuṭotsaṅgaparigrahaṁṛigāṅkajyotsnāvabhāsinonamata nityam eva paśupateḥ paristhitam avasthānam kīdṛiṣam vāmanā chhāyā yasya tad vāmanachchhāyam*).

There is a sport even in his adornment. Śiva, who is all powerful, and who could reduce the universe to ashes, graciously chooses to keep the moon on his head and Pārvatī and Gaṅgā around him, the one looking daggers at the other one might say. Here is an instance of Śiva's profound knowledge of political expediency—*rājanīti*. A verse attributed to Kavirāja describes Śiva's wonderful *rājanīti* in his allowing the moon, the mountain-born Pārvatī and Gaṅgā around him, though, in his infinite power, he could stomach the deadly *kālakūṭa* poison, burn Kāma on the spot and transform the doomsday blaze into his luminous forehead

eye: *jirṇepyutkaṭakākālakūṭakavale dagdhe haṭhān manmathe nīte bhāsurobhālanetratanutām kalpāntadā-vānale yas śaktyā samalaṅkṛito' pi śaśinam śrīśailajām svardhunim dhatte kautukarājanītinipunaḥ pāyāt sa vas śaṅkaraḥ* (*Subhāshitakośa* 4, 41).

Śiva has anyway to be clad and decorated to commence his dance. The Gaṇas are naturally very busily engaged in assisting him, and the final touches are given by Devī herself. This is graphically portrayed, as a word picture, in a verse attributed to Śatānanda in *Subhāshitakośa*. Śiva being dressed up for dance, Ambikā herself places a garland of freshly severed heads on his neck long enough to reach his knees, Nandī adjusts the moon after tightening his locks with snakes, Kāla fastens the elephant hide, Kālarātri places the skull in his hand, thus engaged in the entourage of Śiva, at the start of his dance: *ārdṛām kaṇṭhe mukhābjasrajām avanamayatyambikā jānūlambam sthāne kṛitvendulekhām nibiḍayati jaṭāḥ paṇnagendreṇa nandī kālaḥ kṛittim nibadhnātyupanayati kare kālarātriḥ kapālam sambhor nṛityāvātāre parishad itī pṛithagvyāpṛitā vaḥ punātu* (*Subhāshitakośa* 5, 6).

There is such a stir in hastening the decoration of Śiva that the Gaṇas cannot refrain from creating a scene. In their hurry, they rush and scramble, run and call, hoping thereby to achieve their purpose quicker. As Śiva is anxious to commence his dance, the shouts of the Gaṇas are heard, asking for the ornaments and attributes to be brought and made available quickly. 'Bones and skulls please' cries one, 'elephant hide' says another, 'ashes, oh ! please ashes to smear', 'the moon, the crescent please', 'the stream of Gaṅgā, the heavenly river', 'the snake, please, to decorate him', thus in agitated tone are requests voiced: *ashtthinyasthinyajinam ajinam bhasma bhasmendurindur gaṅgā gaṅgoraga uraga ityākulās sambhrameṇa bhushādānopakaraṇagaṇaprāpaṇavyāpṛitānām nṛtyārambhapraṇayini śive pāntu vācho gaṇānām* (*Saduktikarnāmṛita* 94).

Śiva himself is not less excited, and he also joins the Pramathagaṇas to please them in their exuberance. Says he, 'O Nandī ! get ready the sweet-sounding *muraja* drum by tuning it up. O Kūshmāṇḍa ! bring me my toilet box of ashes. O Lambodara ! come here, I want you for something. O Devī ! please cheer up Skanda in the inner hall by bringing him to the stage court: *nandin khañjanamañjunādamurajam samgrīhya sajjibhava kūshmāṇḍānaya bhasma-bhājanam ito lambodarāgamyatām skandam nandaya mandirodaragatam devīti raṅgāṅgaṇe sambhos tāṇḍa-*



FIG. 5. *Vṛishabhāntika*, early Chola, 11th century A.D., Tiruvenkādu, Tañjāvūr Art Gallery, Tañjāvūr.

vamaṇḍanaikamanasas samjalpitam pātu vaḥ (Saduktikarṇāṃṛita 92).

Sculptural representation is probably only second in importance to the picturesque description that is found in literary composition describing Śiva's hairdo. Bhavabhūti has a telling picture of the arrangement of Śiva's *jaṭās*. He graphically portrays them. The locks are adorned with skulls filled with Gaṅgā's stream, their colour blending with the lightning flame of the forehead eye, with the pretty moon, mistaken for a tender *ketaki* petal, tied together with the string of snake tendrils: *chūḍāpīḍakapālasaṅkulapatanmandākinīvārayo vidyutprāyalalāṭalochanapuṭajyotirvimiśratvishaḥ pāntu tvām akaṭhoretakaśikhāsandigdhamugdhendavo bhūteśasya bhujāṅgavallivalayasraṅgnaddhajūṭā jaṭāḥ (Mālatīmādhava 1, 1).*

It is impossible to understand the beauty of Śiva's crest without the moon, as his name Chandraśekhara itself is after the decoration of his *jaṭās*. It is almost like Vishṇu without the *Kaustubha* gem and Lakshmī mark on his chest, or heaven itself lacking the *Pārijāta* tree, its pride of possession. Kshemendra quotes a verse from the *Setubandha* of Pravarasena recounting

Śiva's *jaṭās*, without the moon, before the milky ocean was churned, as Jāmbavān had seen them when he was quite young: *na tu yathā pravarasenasya—saggam aparijaam kottthupalachchirahiam mahumahassa uram sumirāmi mahana-purao amuddhaandam haraadaḥpabbhāram—(chchāyā: svargam apārijātam kaustubhalakshmīrahitam madhumathanasyorah smarāmi mathanapurato' mugdhachandram cha harajaṭāprāghhārām) (Auchityavichāracharchā, p. 134).*

The *uśhṇīṣha* of Śiva, which is almost a symbol of the *liṅga* itself, has been described in manifold fashion by both poet and sculptor. There is no end of fancy both in the rhetoric of the poet and the cutting by the artist's chisel. All the variety of representation of the *jaṭā* of dancing Śiva in sculpture, as in painting, has its parallel in literary descriptions. The significance voiced by the poet is an additional illumination, as it almost acts as a commentary in understanding the sculptor's device. To take an example: Śiva's *uśhṇīṣha*, made up of snakes with the red light of gems on their hoods tinging the moon, not only creates a wonderful colourful blend but its significance itself, as the remover of ignorance, is of utmost value: *deyād uśhṇīṣhabaddhoragamanīkīraṇaśreṇiṣoṇā sudhāmsor lekhālakshmīs chiram vas timiramavasitodiyamaneva śambhoḥ (Corp. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 268).*

This cannot but recall the famous *Vṛishabhāntika* Śiva from the Tañjāvūr Art Gallery (Fig. 5) where the *uśhṇīṣha* is exactly what is described here, composed entirely of the coils of the snake, deftly woven into *jaṭās*. In a Kalachuri inscription, the *jaṭās* of Śiva are fancied to be the twin of the golden mountain, with hissing snakes moving inside the hollows of Mt. Mandara, with the fire flame of the third eye fanned into a blaze by tempestuous blasts: *yachchūḍāvana-mandarodarachalatphūtkāra . . . vellitam tachchanḍānilanetrādāvadahanajoḍālājaṭālikṛitam svarṇādreriva sodaram vijayate śambhor jaṭāmaṇḍalam (Corp. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 268).*

An unknown poet takes a delight in describing Śiva's *jaṭās* as a huge laden cloud. In the excitement of the dance, there is a downpour of the waters of the celestial stream, a frightful effect of lightning in the sparkling flame, darting from the forehead eye, blasts of wind rushing through the hollows of the garland of skulls produce thunder claps, making Śiva's head a veritable cloud, crimson dark in the rainy season: *nātyāvegavinissṛitatṛipathagāvāripravāhākulaḥ śighrabhrāntivaśāllalāṭanayanajvālāṭāṭidbhī-*

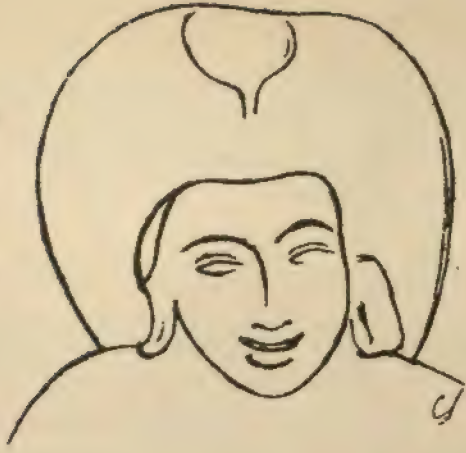


FIG. 6. Śiva with his mass of locks, looking a large cloud, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.

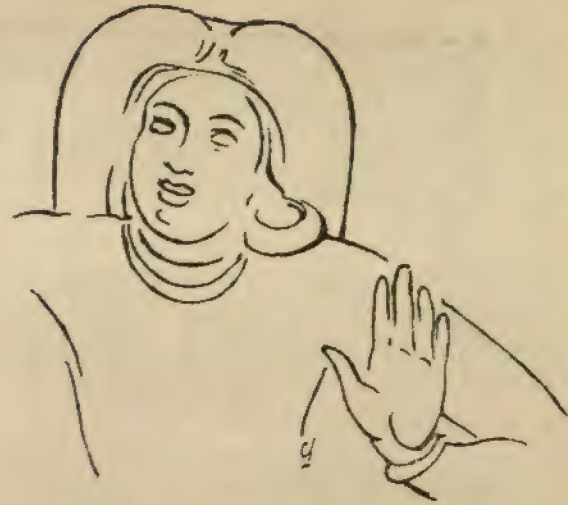


FIG. 8. Śiva with his mass of locks looking a large cloud, Pāṇḍya, 7th century A.D.

śaṇaḥ muṇḍālīkuharaprasarpadanilasphālaprayuktadhvaniḥ prāvṛṭṭkāla ivoditas śivaśiromeghas śivāyāstu vaḥ (Saduktikarnāṃṛita 44).

It is not only a cloud and a laden one, but a brimming, auspicious, joyous *maṅgalakalaśa*. Jalachandra conceives a picture like this of Śiva's *jaṭās*. It is an auspicious brimming vessel, filled with the crystal water of the Ganges, studded with the gemdecked lordly hooded snakes peeping therefrom, like tender tawny sprouts, undoubtedly the remover of all obstacles on the path of the pilgrims towards the city of salvation: *antas svikṛitajāhnavijalam atisvachchhandaratnāṅkuraśreṇīṣoṇabhujāṅganāyaka*

nāchakrollasatpallavam bhūyād abhyudayāya mokshanagaraprasthānabhājām itaḥ pratyūhaprasamai-kapūrnakalaśaprāyam śiro dhūrjateḥ (Saduktikarnāṃṛita 45).

The hue of Śiva's *jaṭās* is red and a poet fancies the red as the lightning at the time of the deluge: *kalpāntasamayoḍḍamataḥidvalayaṇṅalāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 3, p. 48).

Another description makes the *kaparda jaṭas* of Śiva almost kaleidoscopic in colour revelry. The whole cluster of *jaṭās* resembles a cloud with the light of the gems on the snakehoods as lightning, the crescent moon the rainbow, the rain, the water of the heavenly river, the garland of white skulls a row of cranes on the wing. The more interesting point in this idea is that the entire hair mass, a row of clouds, is pushed on by the wind of *dhyānayoga*, for the sprouting of knowledge, which removes the pain of births and deaths: *vidyud yatra maṇidyutiḥ phaṇipater bālendur indrāyudham vāris svargatarāṅgiṇī sitaśiromālā balākāvaliḥ dhyānābhyāsamīraṇopanihitās śreyoṅkurodbhūtaye pāyād vas sa bhavārtitāpabidhurās śambhoḥ kapardāmbudaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 12, p. 8).



FIG. 7. Śiva with *jaṭābhāra* arranged almost like a large cloud, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahābalipuram.

In some of the representations of dancing Śiva, the mass of locks is made to look as one large cloud, as a *jaṭābhāra*, as in some Pallava carvings (Figs. 6, 7) and contemporary Pāṇḍyan ones (Fig. 8). The important idea of *moksha*, and that by just a look at the *jaṭās*, is very significant. In fact, that even a look at the temple tower removes sin is a belief recorded in an inscription: *yadiyaśikharasthitollasadanalpadivyadhvajam samāṇḍapam aho nṛiṇām api vidūrataḥ paśyatām anekabhavasamchitam kshayam iyarti pāpam*

drutam sa pātu padapañkajānataharis samiddheśvaraḥ
(Hist. Inscr. of Gujarat 2, Chālukya, p. 35).

The play of colours on Śiva's *jaṭās* is again described elsewhere by another poet as red by nature, rendered somewhat white by the rays of the moon, mottled blue by the lustre of gems on the hoods of snakes, looking like the rainbow on white clouds: *svabhāvapiṅgās śasiraśmiṣubhrā bhujaṅgaratnāmkuranīlabhāsah rakshantu vo manmathasūdanasya jaṭās sitābdasthasurāyudhābhāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 32, p. 345).

In some of the early sculptures, like the Vākāṭaka, early Chālukyan and even early Pallava and very early Chōla, there is this impression of a large *liṅga* shape anthill-like mass interposed in which, the snakes, the flower, the skull and the crescent moon, give a picturesque effect. Bhartṛihari gives almost the reason for this glorious *jaṭā* of Śiva removing the ignorance of ages, to lead the devotee on to the path of virtue and liberation. The *jaṭā* is a symbol of the *Śivaliṅga* itself, which is, as it were, a lamp post. Śiva resplendant by the golden flame of the lovely crescent of the crest moon, that playfully burnt the active moth of a cupid, bright at the tip of the wick of all good, is ever victorious, as the lamp of knowledge in the mind-mansion of seers expelling the large mass of darkness of ignorance swelling up: *chūḍottamsitachandrachārūkalikāchāñchachchhikkābhāsvaro līlādagdhavilokāmaśalabhas śreyodaśāgre sphuran antas sphūrjadapāramohatimiraprāgbhāramuchchāṭayanśchetassadmani yoginām vijayate jñānapradīpo haraḥ* (Bhartṛihariśataka I, 1).

That is why, in the *Halāyudhastotra*, Śiva's removing the fetters of illusion, as the Lord of enlightenment, is specially described. O Lord Granter of boons, those who comprehend you as their own self, entirely of the nature of bliss and supreme knowledge, shake off the illusion of the expanse of the world, apart from him, steady their minds by giving up attachments and with the knots of the tight fetters dropped, they attain liberation, even as they are alive on earth: *tvām ātmānam varada paramānandabodhasvarūpam ye budhyante vigalita jagadbhedamāyāprapañcham rāgatyāgāt stimitamanaso deva jīvanta eva bhraśyanmāyānibidānigadagrañthayas te vimuktāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 25, p. 181).

The moon on Śiva's crest, a crescent, is also very significant. Śiva has chosen the moon with great care as he is a lover of qualities. Appayya Dikshita has already referred to Śiva's noble

qualities of proclaiming to the world the special merit of one who deserves praise. The wise one extols merit but makes no mention of foibles, like Śiva who holds up the crescent moon on his head and just swallows the poison, allowing it to linger in his throat: *guṇadoshau budho grihṇan indukshvelāviveśvaraḥ śirasā ślāghate pūrvam anyat kaṇṭhe niyachchhati* (Kūvalayānanda).

The Deoli plates of Kṛishṇa III give a beautiful idea of how Śiva appreciates great qualities. The moon is borne by Śiva on his crest, as he is fond of great qualities and fully appreciates the beloved of the blue lilies, the friend of Kāma, the joyous feast for the eyes of the entire universe, the beauty spot for the sky itself, even as a lunar fragment, charming in that attenuated state, as he was so rendered by his offering himself with all his ambrosial rays as food for the gods to their heart's content: *śrīman asti nabhassthalaikatilakas trailokyanetrotsavo devo manmathabāndhavaḥ kumudinīnāthas sudhādīdhītiḥ niśśeshāmaratarpaṇārpitatanuprakshīnatālamkṛiter yasyāśas śirasā guṇapriyatayā nūnam dhṛitas sambhunā* (Epigraph. Ind. 5, p. 192).

Śiva appreciates all great qualities, the beauty of the heart and the beauty of the form. The moon has both. The aesthetic quality of the moon has been described elsewhere. The crescent moon of Śiva, the weapon of Cupid, the conqueror of the three worlds and the one aesthetic object for damsels to settle their eyes on, is indeed the right decoration on Śiva's locks: *tribhuvanaṭṭayinas smarasya śāstram hariṇadṛiśām lalitaikadrīṣṭipātrām sakalasuraguroḥ śirovatamso jagati tanotu sudhām asau sudhāmśuḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 27, p. 187).

In addition to this, Śiva is the Lord of all physicians, Bhishaktama, and he appreciates the medicinal quality of the moon. The moon on Śiva's crest is the medicine of the thirty-three million celestials, the lone petal of *Kalpaka* amidst the waves of the Ganges adorning the locks of Dhūrjaṭi understood as ether: *bhūyād vaḥ kṣaṇadālālāma jagatinirveśadhāma trayastriṃsatkoṭitayāsātām sumanasām āyushyam ekaushadham ākāśavyapadeśadhūrjaṭijaṭālamkāragāṅgāpayaḥkallolaikalakalpakachchhadanibhānandāya chāndrīkalā* (Hyd. Arch. Series No. 4, p. 2).

Naturally Śiva enthrones the moon and gives him all royal paraphernalia. The moon, placed on the throne-like golden *jaṭās* of Śiva, provided the waving of the *chaurī* through the spray of the Ganges, the white snake garland

with uplifted hoods serving as umbrella over him, is proclaimed the foremost of kings. The moon himself is called Rāja and Dvijarāja, and Śiva fulfills this significant term for the moon in full appreciation of his qualities: *yatsimhāsanam īśvarasya kanakaprāyam jaṭāmaṇḍalam gaṅgāśīkaramaṇjarīparikarair yachchāmaraprakriyā śvetotphullaphaṇāñchalas śivaśīrassandānādamoragas chhatram yasya jayatyasāvacharamo rājā sudhādīdhitih* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 307).

The moon, as an element of āhārya, or dress in nāṭya, is mainly, however, a flower decoration for Śiva described as the wearer of flowers from the sky garden—*pushkaram pushpavāṭi* (Kūvalayānanda). The flower here is the moon. The Bilhari Chedi inscription describes the moon as the flower bedecking the forest of jaṭās of Śiva: *pāyād vas sa jaṭāvanaikakusumam sārvaḥ sudhādīdhitih* (Epigraph. Ind. I, p. 254).

The choice of Śiva of the other adornment for his jaṭās, the heavenly river, is not any the less indicative of his taste and discrimination. If Mammaṭa feels that the beauty of the feminine breast is best perceived when it is half hidden by a veil (*kāminīkuchakalāśavat gūḍham chatkaroti agūḍham tu sphuṭataya vāchyāyamānaḥ* (Kāvya prakāśa, 5), the jaṭā of Śiva, also of great natural beauty, is appreciated better when it has a thin veil in the stream of the Ganges. The heavenly river, with her mass of water pervades the sky, shakes the sun and other planets by her velocity, with her myriads of wave lines derides the ocean, white like the moon, acts as a graceful veil, on the crest of the moon-crested lord, fast bound by graceful tresses of locks: *vegoddhūtāryamādigrahagaganatalam vyaśnuvānā jalaughair nyakkurvaṇā sāmudrān kshayavalitajalān ūrmimālāsahasraṇi deyaḥ abhyarthitam vas śāśadharadhavalasvardhunī chandramauler maulaulilām vahanti sphuṭavikaṭajajābandhane chīrikāyāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. II, p. 120).

The lovely stream of Gaṅgā is normally understood as resplendant, as a garland of mālatī flowers on his head and makes Śiva look a real dandy, a śrīṅgārī: *devaḥ pāyāt sa vas śrīmān śrīṅgārī girijāpriyaḥ yasya gaṅgā jaṭājūṭe mālatīmālikāyate* (Epigraph. Ind. 32, p. 137).

But the meandering stream of the Ganges is so elusive of form, that she creates a doubt in the minds of even the celestials, who find it difficult to comprehend as much her physical form as her innate power to almost drown Śiva. The stream of the Ganges, with lovely tortuous

waves meandering on Śiva's head, creates such doubts in the minds of the celestials as whether they are lily garlands, digits of the moon, or the sprouts of deeds of merit, or sloughs of snakes, or ashes dropping from Śiva: *kim mālāḥ kumudasya kim śaśikalāḥ kim dharmakarmāṅkurāḥ kim vā kañchukikañchukāḥ kim atha vā bhūtyudgamā bhāntyamī ittham nākivitaritās śivaśīrassāñchārī-nākāpagārīṅgadvalgutarāṅgabhaṅgitatayaḥ punyaprapāḥ pāntu vaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 2, p. 10 and Corp. Inscr. Ind. IV, p. 314).

The movement of the Gaṅgā forms another great picture for a poet. Somewhere passing through the hollow of the skull of Brahmā on Śiva's crest, she becomes a gurgling stream, elsewhere she is every moment danced about incessantly by the deep breath of the hooded snakes, somewhere else she rocks with velocity the crescent moon tastefully arranged on the crest, the stream of Gaṅgā on the locks of the destroyer of Smara, assures auspiciousness: *kva cha na ghaṭite brāhme muṇḍe sagadgadaveṇikā kva cha na bhujagaśvāsair ugrair anukshapanartitā kva cha na rachitam rekhāchandram rayena vidhunvatī smaraharaśirogaṅgā maṅgalyam āvahatu sthīram* (Daśarūpaka I, p. 2).

The Ganges adorning Śiva's head is conceived almost as a royal attribute, as he is an emperor among dancers. The bound up crown of jaṭās of Śiva is a treasure-house of all prosperity and auspiciousness, in which the rollicking waters of the heavenly stream, Gaṅgā, appear a white parasol, held up by a gust from the open mouth of the terrible-looking lord of snakes, with hoods expanded by the pain of being drawn into a tight knot: *pāyād vas sa samastamaṅgalanidhis śambhor jaṭājūṭako yasmin lolalasaddyumaṇḍalagalanmandākinivāribhiḥ gādhagranthini pīḍitoragapatiprasphāraphullatphaṇābhīmavyāvṛitavaktramārutadhṛitais śvetātapatrāyitam* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 254).

Her purifying power is gloriously given by Kālidāsa in the *Kumārasambhava* where a look at the Ganges, the touch of the stream, not to talk of the partaking of it, assures instantaneous removal of all effect of sin. She is Tripathagā and purifies the heaven, earth, the nether-world. The Gaṅgā on Śiva's head marks a three-fold path where she emancipates mortals on earth, reptiles in the netherworld, and the celestials in heaven, justifying her name *Tripathagā*.

The skull, which is a distinctive decoration of Śiva on the crest, though the most inauspi-



cious, renders Śiva all the more auspicious (*śavamunḍābharaṇopi pāvanah*). As fancied by Ratnākara, Śiva's ornament on his *jaṭā*, the skull of Brahmā's head cut off, almost resounding with the Vedic chant, through the deep sound of the stream of Gaṅgā descending into its deep cavities, creates a weird drone, as Śiva dances: *mandākinīsalīlānirbharapūryamānagam-bhīrakukshikuharodgatātāranādam adyāpi yasya śīrasi śriyam etyaśāntavedadhvanīva parameshṭhiśīraḥka-pālam* (*Haravijaya* 1, 43). The sound of Vedic chant is indeed the most auspicious.

Really this is a very weird decoration, as the skull ornament, dilapidated, shedding its teeth as he tosses his head, and laughing anon, appears like the remaining teeth of the sun seeking his help to save them: *nishpeshabhītīśaraṇāga-tapūshavaktraśeshāpareva hasatā vidhutottamāṅgam yena vyalokyata purāṇakapālamaulibandhachyutā daśanapaṅktir adhaḥ patantī* (*Haravijaya* 1, 41).

Tāṇḍava: Mountains Tossed

The graphic description of the thundering dance of Śiva in *tāṇḍava* has no better elaborate picture presented in literature than in the *Haravijaya*. The gyrations are so tempestuous and the movement of the hands creates such blasts during their *chārī* movements that they toss about mountains, uprooted from the earth, that float and reel circles in the air as if afraid of coming down to enter the netherworld, Pātāla: *doraṇḍakhaṇḍapavanochchhalitā vichitra-chārivilāsadalitakshitipīṭhabandhāḥ yasya bhram-anti girayo'mbaramārga eva pātālāpātachakitā iva tāṇḍaveshu* (*Haravijaya* 1, 46).

The hands of Śiva in motion, raising blasts, scatter mountains sportingly in the dance of the twilight of deluge: *saṁhārārātrimukhatāṇḍa-vaḍambareshu doraṇḍakhaṇḍapavanābhīhatāḥ puras-tāt yasya kramād apasaranti parikramaikalilāvakāśa-ghaṭanārtham ivādrināthāḥ* (*Haravijaya* 1, 44).

A verse attributed to Bheribhāṅkāra has a similar graphic picture of the effect of so violent a dance. Śiva's *tāṇḍava* movements, in which the playful whirling of arms produce blasts blowing up mountain crests, which, splashing and swelling the waters of the oceans, suggest the confluence of the heavenly river from his crest, the stars in myriads, rubbed by the tips of his beautiful *jaṭās* and falling, creating the impression of a rain of flowers: *uchchair uttāla-kheladbhujavanapavanoddhūtaśailaughapātasphāro-dañchatpayodhiprakāṭitamukutaśvaradhunīsamgamāni jīyāsus tāṇḍavāmi sphuṭavikaṭajajāṭakotisamghaṭtabhū-*

ribhraśyannakshatrachakravavyavasitasumanovriṣṭipā-tāni śambhoḥ (*Śārngadharapaddhati* 66).

The great dance in the expanse of heaven, earth and ocean, with the mountains tossed about, tinging gold by their golden hue, the waters of the sea, into which they rushed splashing, as if afraid of the thuds of the thunderbolt, suggests the fall of the tiger skin from the waist of Śiva in his ecstatic dance movements: *sandhyānṛittānubandhrutarayaśīthilagraṇ-thinirmuktamadhyam sthāṇor vaiyāghram ārād aji-nam iva bhuvi sramsamānam vireje vajratrāsākulāntas sṛitaśikharikachatkāñchanādhityakorvīnīshṭhyū-tābhīshuvamśavyatikarāśabalachchhāyam ambho'm-burāśeḥ* (*Haravijaya* 22, 59).

This fancy of Ratnākara about the mountains reeling circles in the air, and almost rushing into the sea, afraid of the weapon of Indra, is almost anticipated in the *Somanāthaprasāsti* where there is a graphic description of Śiva's *sandhyā tāṇḍava*, terrible, with a hurricane raised by the wild movement of his circle of arms, causing mountains to fly up in groups, necessitating Indra to look again at his thunderbolt for action to clip their wings: *sandhyātāṇḍavaḍambaravyasanino bhīmasya chaṇḍabhramivya-nṛityadbhujadaṇḍamaṇḍalabhuvō jhañjhanīlāḥ pāntu vah yesham uchchhalatām javena jhagiti vyūheshu bhumībhrītām uddīneshu bīḍaujasā punar asau dam-bholir ālokitāḥ* (*Somanāthaprasāsti* in *Subhāshita-ratnakośa* 4, 21).

So forceful is Śiva's dance that it causes mountains to shake, waters of the ocean to soar up to heaven and earth itself to crack: *praspan-dire śikharīṇo'bhipayāmsi dūram ākāśavarīma pari-puṣṭvire'nuvelam puṣṭhoṭa chāvanitalam balacha-kraṇḍalamardena yasya haraṇṛitta iva prayāṇe* (*Haravijaya* 16, 41).

It is exactly these tempestuous movements of Śiva in *tāṇḍava* which are not only a portend of destruction but a harbinger of creation that puzzle Pushpadanta, who after describing Śiva's footfalls, as almost the despair of the very existence of earth's surface, the ether with its planets grievously hit by the moving arms, the sky uneasy by constant lashing of the *jaṭās*, puts the question whether really the Lord dances for protecting the universe, and finally concludes that the ways of the Almighty are truly strange and inscrutable: *mahī pādāghātād bhajati sahasā saṁsayapadam padam viśṇor bhrā-myadbhujaparigharugṇagrahagaṇam muhur dyaur daushṭhyam yātyanibhṛitajajātādītatayā jagadrakshā-*

yai tvam naṭasi nanu vāmaiva vibhūtā (Mahimnas-tava, 16). A later day poet, Rāmabhadra Dikshita, recalls this lashing of the stars in the sky with the jaṭās swaying in dance and the earth sinking by his thuds in his verse, *samda-darśa sapadi bhramajjaṭātāditoḍupāṭalam tadā janaḥ vyālanūpuraraṇatpadārpaṇanyañchitakshiti naṭeśa-nartanam* (Patañjalicharita 4, 67).

It is this very difficult and exceedingly violent movement of Śiva in his dance that makes Nandī caution for more space to help make Śiva's dance easier, addressing the celestials of the quarters to move aside, the clouds to move away, to keep open the sky, the earth to go down to the netherworld, the mountains to spread themselves on the ground, Brahmā to shoot up his abode of the lotus as high as possible, as our lord Śambhu feels the present situation uncomfortable for his dance: *devā dikpatayaḥ prayāta parataḥ kham muñchatāmbho-muchaḥ pātālam vraja medini praviśata kshoṇīṭalam bhūdharaḥ brahmannunnaya dūram ātmasadanam nathasya no nṛityatas śambhos samkaṭam etad ityavatu vaḥ protsāraṇā nandināḥ* (Sārṅgadharapaddhati 108).

Nandī wants still more space for the dance, as he apprehends discomfort for Śiva in his movements. At the commencement of the dance of his Lord he calls in great excitement: O earth! excuse a little agitation; O primal tortoise! continue your function, supporting the earth in spite of difficulties; O lordly mountains! Kailāsa, Meru and the rest supporting the earth! sink down a little; O Brahmā! would you mind going up above; O oceans! do not be agitated, steady yourselves; the eight-formed Lord is to commence his dance: *kshoṇi kshobham kshamasva tvam api kuru mahākūrma karma svakīyam bho bhoḥ kailāsa-meruprabhṛitikuladhārādharīṇo gachchatādhaḥ brahman udgachchha dūram kuruta jaladhayaḥ sthairyam ityashṭamūrter bharttur nṛityāvātāre sarabhasaga-ditāḥ pāntu vo nandivāchaḥ* (Saduktikarṇāmṛita 95).

The unfettered wild leaps of Śiva in the tāṇḍava of the twilight of deluge seem to raise up a second heaven as it were, lit red with the blood stain of the dripping elephant hide: *yenāsakṛtīpralayakālaniśāvatārāprārābhatāṇḍavanir-argalaḍambareṇa utkshiptam ambaram ivāparam ūḍhasāndhyarāgam vinirgaladasṛigdvipacharma babhre* (Haravijaya 8, 7).

Against Elephant Hide

A glowing picture of Śiva dancing against the dark elephant hide, in the evening, with

drops of water from the stream of Gangā shaken by the quivering elephant hide, that appear like pearls from the temples of the animal, is indeed interesting colourful delineation of white twinkling dots against the dark sky, almost like stars: *lolāñchalānilavinirdhutasiddhasindhunīrandhrasīkarakarālatayā chakāsti sā-yāhmatāṇḍavavidhau gajarājakṛittir yasyādhunāpya-jahatīva kavāṭamuktāḥ* (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 5, 10).

Kālidāsa's picturesque description of the commencement of the *Sandhyātāṇḍava* of Śiva in the Mahākāla shrine at Ujjain, with his forest of arms encircling him, aglow with the red of twilight, desiring anew the wet and dripping elephant hide as background, and gazed at with devotion by Bhavāni, is no doubt a theme always in the mind of later poets: *paśchād uchchair bhujataruṇam maṇḍalenābhilinas sāmḍhyam tejaḥ pratinavajapāpushparaktam dadhānaḥ nṛityārambhe hara paśupater ādranāgājinech-chhām sāntodvegastimitanayanam dṛishṭabhaktir bhavānyā* (Meghadūta 1, 36). Ratnākara has not only taken the word *ādranāgājina* of this verse but the line *gajājinaṃ śonitabinduvarshi cha* (Kumārasambhava 5, 67), to comment on the red and black of the hide, as the background for the forceful movements of Śiva's dance.

Bāṇa similarly suggests the crimson glow of sunset red like tender shoots at the time of Kalpa's deluge, when blue-throated Śiva dances and prominently presents both the colours red and dark: *kalpāntapradoshasandhyeva pranṛittamilakaṇṭhā pallavāruṇā cha* (Kādambarī, p. 39).

Mañkha has a picture of the dark sunset, heightening the tone of the dark of fast approaching night, completely ignoring the crimson glow. Darkness is increased, as it were, by the smoke from the breath of the snakes, ornaments of Śiva, very tired, owing to his strenuous dance movements: *tāmyatām adhika-sāndhyanartane śambhukaṇkaṇaphaṇābhṛitām ivaśvā-sadhūmavisarena māmsalam tat tamisram atudad viyogināḥ* (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 10, 22).

Viśākhadatta has chosen a contrast of white against black, where Kālidāsa has presented a picture of black against red, for the same theme. Here also it is the glory of the tāṇḍava dance, immediately after the destruction of Gajāśura. This is graphically described by the poet, creating a picturesque scene of the beautiful white form of Śiva against the dark background of the elephant hide, comparing

the whole thing to the autumnal sky moonlit, Viśākhadatta considers the form of Śiva as Gajāntaka, a rare beautiful one like autumn, whitening the sky by the smear of ashes, more radiant than the *kāśa* flowers, that bloom in the season, overcoming the gloom of the elephant hide, dark like the laden clouds, by the myriad rays of the moon, most beautiful in autumn and equally charming on Śiva's head, wearing a garland of skulls, white like the moon light, and smiling bright, like swans on the wing, laughter itself being considered in poet's parlance in India as white. We may recall Kālidāsa's fancy of a heap of white foam composed of Śiva's terrific laughter in *tāṇḍava*: *rāśibhūtaḥ pratidinam iva triambakasyāṭṭahāsaḥ* (Meghadūta 2, 11) *ākāśam kāśāpushpachchhavim abhibhavatā bhasmanā śuklayanti śītāmsor amśujālair jaladharamalinam klišnati kṛittim aibhim kāpālim udvahanti srajam iva dhavalām kaumudim ityapūrvā hāsyasrīrājahamsā haratu tanur iva kleśam aiśi śarad vaḥ* (Mudrārākshasa 3, 21).

While the *aṭṭahāsa* of Śiva, which is qualitatively loud and quantitatively a huge mass of white, *rāśibhūtaḥ*, normally goes with the terrific *tāṇḍava* of the three-eyed Lord, Tryambaka, it is also associated with the *lāśya* of the Lord of all sentient beings, *paśupati*, which is a great sport for him, delighting him to burst into laughter, white as ambrosia, as Bāṇa would have it: *paśupatilāsyakriḍeva sudhādhavalāṭṭahāsā* (Kādambarī, p. 103).

Ratnākara also paints a picture of Śiva's dance against a white background. Śiva's ash-smearing white hands in motion widen the sky and scare away peacocks, by the appearance of white in clouds, disappointing them in their expectation of laden clouds promising rain. The hands of Śiva, with the fingers in nimble motion of *abhinaya*, simulate the fast changing cloud contours: *bhasmāṅgarāgadhavaleshu bhujeshu tasya kalmāshayatsu gaganam karavartanābhis śubhrābhrarājichakitāḥ paripuñjyamānapichchhāvachūlavapushas śikhino vidadruḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 25).

Handicaps in Dance Movements

But, withal, Śiva has to pause awhile, almost control his dance, as his movements are fraught with the danger of breaking up the universe. He cannot fully lift up his leg for fear that the cauldron of the universe may split, thus rendering it not so easy for the Lord of the crescent moon crest jewel, on a platform so fragile for a dance so virile: *brahmāṇḍakarparāparisphuṭanābhisandher ūrdhvam virachyata tathā na cha daṇḍa-*

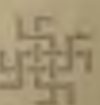
pādaḥ ittham na śitakiraṇābharaṇasya nrīttam ādhāradurbalatayā savilāsam asīt (Haravijaya 2, 56).

With controlled movement of hands, apprehending disaster to the quarters, and mercifully treading the ground softly, lest the earth break asunder, Śiva dances anon with grace and with poise: *dordāṇḍakhaṇḍavalanānyatisamkatatvam utprekshya no vidadhire kakubhām purastāt vinyastamandacharaṇam parichakrame cha bhūmaṇḍalam vidalatīti dayānubandhāt* (Haravijaya 2, 55).

Here one cannot but recall the telling verses of Viśākhadatta, who, as a great devotee of Śiva, like Kālidāsa, has a beautiful description of Śiva's dance, particularly *tāṇḍava*. One of the *Nāndī* verses graphically describes the success of Śiva in an impossible situation as he dances on an *ādhāra*, the *raṅgabhūmi*, which is not at all equal to the *ādheya*, the dancer himself. He rightly calls it *duḥkhanṛitta*, as he has to control not only his movements and foot-falls in pure dance *nṛitta*, his hands and movements in *nāṭya*, full of gesticulation in *abhinaya*, and emotional glances, most meaningful in conveying *rasas*. He considers this dance of Śiva as a difficult one, considering local conditions, as he has to tread softly, avoiding bolder foot pats, in his anxiety to avoid the sinking of the earth, carefully contracting his arms in gesticulation as they extend beyond the world, avoiding his glance at objects in the fear of a conflagration by sparks of fire issuing from his eyes: *pādasyāvīrbhavantīm avanatīm avane rakshatas svairapātais samkochenaiva doṣhṇām muhur abhinayatas sarvalokātīgānām dṛiṣṭīm lakshyeshu nograḥvalanakaṇamuchām badhnato dāhabhīter ityādhārānurodhāt tripuravijayinaḥ pātu vo duḥkhanṛittam* (Mudrārākshasa 1, 2).

Raudra Rasa of Tāṇḍava and Bhāvābhinaya

Elsewhere, Viśākhadatta gives a striking picture of Rudra's gesticulation of *raudra rasa* during the *tāṇḍava*. *Raudrarasa*, with *krodha* or anger as its main mood, *sthāyī bhāva*, where violent movements of the limbs form the *anubhāva*, the excitement causing tears to roll down the cheeks, exhibiting *samchārī* and *sātvikabhāvas*. The word *tripuravijayin*, used for Śiva, is most appropriate, as not only is it the greatest heroic triumph of Śiva, but the blaze of the three castles, golden, brazen and silver, is a symbol in the flames of the anger of Śiva. Viśākhadatta presents this picture of the *raudra tāṇḍava* of Rudra, his blazing red eyes



with tears of rage washing the lids throbbing in excitement, as the eye-brows knit simulate smoke strands, the strike of the foot causing a terrific quake, sustained with great difficulty by the earth. This is the most telling description of the sentiment of terror in the powerful masculine dance of Śiva: *samrambhaspandipakshmaksharadamalajalakshālānakshāmāyāpi bhrūbhaṅgodbhedadhūmam jvalitam iva purāḥ piṅgayā netrabhāsā manye rudrasya raudram rasam abhinayatas tāṇḍavesu smarantya samjātodagrakampam katham āpi dharayā dhāritāḥ pādaghātāḥ* (*Mudrārākshasa* 3, 50).

As Śiva's eyes turn towards the snakes on his wrists during the dance, they painfully revolve by the heat generated, exhibiting the yellow tinge of their nether part, making them appear real golden bracelets: *tasyādhinṛittamanasolbanadṛiṣṭipātalakshyikṛiteshu phaṇino maṇibandhaneshu tattāpakhedaparivartanalakshyamāṇapitodarāḥ kanakakambuvilāsam āpuḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 52).

Śiva's dance in gyratory movements of pleasing stances of delicate *aṅgahāras*, appealing in *rasa* and *bhāva*, emotion and mood, and matched by gestures and glances, is indeed the very pink of perfection: *sāvartanābhīr abhito lalitāṅgahārasobhā manoramaparikramatām vahanti cheto jahāra dayitā rasabhāvahṛidyarūpā kriyā puraripos śubhahastadṛiṣṭiḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 54).

Nilakaṇṭha and Nilakaṇṭha

Śiva's dance movements commence with the rhythmic limb movements, as Nandī joyously plays the drum, set on his lap, noble in sound like the rumble of the cloud, calling on the support of the blue-necked peacock, unfurling his plumes: *sānandanandikaratāḍitapushkarāgrachetoharāṅkikapayodharanādahṛiṣṭāḥ ārabdharechakalayaḥ kalayāṅchakāra līlām sa mechakagalas sphuṭachandrakaśrīḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 53).

Bhavabhūti has the idea of Śiva and the peacock as *nilakaṇṭha*, blue-throated, dancing as Nandī plays the drum, in a context not unlike the above. A peculiar situation that arises as Śiva commences his *tāṇḍava* dance is narrated by him to show how incongruous elements like the peacock and the serpent, one afraid of the other, but both living together with the inmates of a happy family on Mount Kailāsa, still exhibit, instead of mutual comradeship, a certain terror, creating a funny situation. Nandī's joyous beat of the drum, calling the peacock to dance, frightens the serpent to run into the trunk of Gaṇeśa, who, in his turn,

trumpets and shakes his head, disturbing the swarms of bees on his cheeks, the quarters resounding with their drone as they fly around, all as Śiva commences his *tāṇḍava* dance: *sānandam nandihastāhatamurajaravāhūtakaumārabharitrāsānnāsāgrarandhram viśati phaṇipatau bhoga-saṅkochabhāji gaṇḍoḍḍinālimālāmukharitakakubhas tāṇḍave śulapāṇer vainākyas chiram vo vadanavi-dhutayaḥ pāntu chūtkāravatyah* (*Mālatīmādhava* 1, 2).

Here has to be recalled Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarāchārya's description of Śiva as the blue-throated, like a peacock, dancing, enjoying the company of Devī as the peahen, with the rain of tears of joy of devotees as spectators, the gazing glances of the celestials as lightning, the sound of the drum played, by Hari, as the deep rumble of the thundering cloud, at the close of the summer day in beautiful twilight: *sandhyā gharmadinātyayo harikarāghātaprabhūtānakadhvāno vāridagarjitam divishadām dṛiṣṭichchhaṭā chañchalā bhaktānām paritoshabāshpavitatir vṛiṣṭir mayūri śivā yasminnujjvalatāṇḍavam vijayate tam nilakaṇṭham bhaje* (*Śivānandalaharī* 54).

Forest of Arms in Motion

Kālidāsa rightly styles the multiplicity of arms of Śiva as composing a forest. In his glorious picture of Mahākālā's *sandhyātāṇḍava*, he paints the Lord as having a forest of hands encircling him, aglow with the hue of *japaku-suma* flowers at the wane of day, and fond of the blood-dripping dark hide of the elephant as background at the commencement of his dance, on which, Devī, recovering from her fright at the weird sight, gazes with devotion in appreciation at its aesthetic quality. The hands not only cluster around Śiva encircling him, but there is also a circle of flames formed against the dark elephant hide background, with Śiva's immaculate white form set off against this, a picture which, apart from appropriate colour composition, creates a masterly sculpturesque situation, inspiring masterpieces at the hands of successive sculptors that have enriched Indian art during the centuries. The three principal actors of a circle of flames on the fringe of the elephant hide background of dancing Śiva, the radiating arms spread out all around, like a cluster of trees, and the frightened look of Devī, receding, yet halting, to gaze at the magnificent spectacle of her Lord's triumphant dance, is nowhere more effectively presented than in the metal image of Gajāntaka from Valuvūr (Fig. 9) and the stone one from Dārāsūram, both representing phases of Chōla art, an earlier and a later. The



FIG. 9. *Gajāntaka*, early Chōla, 11th century A.D., Vaḷuvūr, Taiñjāvūr Distt.

expanse of the face as a circle, almost with the red *jaṭās*, flaming all around making it a *jaṭājvālāvalaya*, is also another interesting feature in this form. It is this that is pictured by Bāṇa as he describes the red glow of sunset as simulating Gajasamhāra Śiva, appearing fearful with the blood of the elephant demon smeared on him, and with an expanse of the face as a circle: *sadyogalitagajadānava-dehalohitopalepabhīshaṇo mukhamāṇḍalābhoga iva mahābhairavasya* (*Harshacharita* 8, p. 86).

The numerous hands suggestive of a forest, as pictured by Kālidāsa, has so captured the imagination of poets and sculptors, that both in literature and in art, particularly in the representation of Śiva dancing, this epithet is given a special stress. Bāṇa, in describing a vast forest tract, with the tree trunks entwined by the coils of innumerable snakes, fancies their close resemblance to the forest of Śiva's numerous arms: *iśānabāhuvanam iva mahābhogi-maṇḍalasahasrādhishṭhitaṭprakoshṭham* (*Kādambarī*,

p. 175). Bāṇa fancies in the context of a stately *sālmālī* tree, with large boughs all around, that reminds him of it, the spectacle of Śiva's myriad hands spread out in dance, beyond the expanse of the quarters, as if to measure them, thereby eulogising the expansive form of the Lord of the dance of deluge: *dikchakra-vālaparimāṇam iva gṛhṇatā bhuvanāntarālaviprakīrṇena sākhāsañchayena pralayakālatāṇḍavaprasāritabhujasahasram uḍupatiśekharam iva viḍambayitum udyataḥ* (*Kādambarī*, p. 47). Subandhu, who never misses an opportunity to refer to the evening dance of Śiva, punningly describes the forest of arms of the Great Dancer, adorned with quivering snake ornaments: *mahāṇṭabāhuvaneneva baddhabhujāṅgāṅkena* (*Vāsavadattā*, p. 115, 160). It is interesting that Trivikrama is even more precise and specific in his description of this forest of arms as he draws attention to the circlet formed over his head by holding aloft snakes, a feature observed in many sculptures of Naṭeśa as from Bādāmī, Aihole, Paṭṭadakal, Bhubaneśvar, etc. *līlayā maṇḍali-*

kṛitya bhujāṅgān dhārayan haraḥ deyaḥ devo varāhas cha tubhyam abhyadhikām śriyam (Nalachampū, iv, 30).

Ratnākara adds lustre to the concept of *bhujataruvana* by describing this forest of arms as adorned with bracelets of black cobras, the gems on whose hoods tinge the quarters red, and make them appear like crimson flames, spurting from jets of smoke at the dissolution of the world: *tena vyadhāyishata bāhuvanapra-koshthabaddhāsitoragaphaṇāmaṇirāgaṇḍiṅgāḥ samhā-rakālarabhasotthitadhūmadāṇḍakalmāshitānalaśikhā iva digvibhāgāḥ (Haravijaya 2, 51).*

Not only that; as the hands of Śiva come in contact with the mountains, striking them in their movements, puffs of red laterite powder are scattered by the wind raised in this act, giving the appearance of their emitting blood: *tasyāśu śonitam ivojjagarur garishṭhadordāṇḍaghā-tavidhurā girayas tadānim udvartanānilarayotthi-tadhātavīyadhūlichchhaṭārūṇitanirjharavichibhāṅgāḥ (Haravijaya 2, 50).*

Gaṅgā's Movement

The swirling movement of Śiva's head in *tāṇḍava* releases Gaṅgā from the tips of the *jaṭā*, creating an impression of the stream of the heavenly river issuing from the *daṇḍapāda* of Viṣṇu in his incarnation as Trivikrama: *līlāvadhūtaśirasosya valajjaṭāgraniṣhyandisāndrasa-līlokshitakotibhāgāt uchchaṇḍatāṇḍavarasasya vini-jagāma mandākinī madhurīpor iva daṇḍapādāt (Haravijaya 2, 49).*

The spill of Ganges water from the locks of moon-crested Śiva, shaken during his dance, and the oozing of the moon stones, by the effect of the lunar rays, swell the ocean and magnify the volume of the heavenly stream: *sāndhyatāṇḍavavilāsasamsarachchandraśekharaśiras-sarijjalaih pūryamāṇa iva nīradhir dadhe vṛiddhim indudṛishadambubhis saha (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 10, 23).*

It is interesting that in Cambodian representations of Naṭarāja's dance Gaṅgā is shown spurting up and sporting her way down in two streams as if to represent Gaṅgā and Yamunā in spate. The envy of Gaurī at the good fortune of Gaṅgā in the place obtained by her on the *jaṭās* of Śiva, described by Viśākhadatta, making Śiva appear a Śathanāyaka, and trying to answer Pārvatī's queries like, 'who is the blessed one on your head', by evasive remarks like 'the digit of the moon', 'is Śaśikalā her name?' 'Of course, it is the word for it', 'I ask

of a woman and not the moon', 'well, ask your maid Vijayā if you have no faith in my crest moon' *dhanyā keyam sthitā te śirasi śaśikalā kim nu nāmaitad asyāḥ nāmaivāsyās tadetat parichitam api te vismṛitam kasya hetoḥ nārīm pricchhāmi nendum kathayatu vijayā na pramāṇam yadindur devyā nihnotum ichchhor iti surasaritam śāṭhyam avyād vibhor vaḥ (Mudrārākṣha 1, 1)* is further enlivened by Ratnākara where he describes the tinge of the blue throat of Śiva as the embrace of the blue stream of Yamunā on the neck, as if to assert her right to an equal place in the Lord's affection, like Gaṅgā herself, bringing in the jealousy of another co-wife to disturb the already disturbed domestic peace: *yasyānurāga-vaśatas sphuṭakālākūṭachhāyāchchhalena kṛitakelika-chāvamardam īrshyānubandhakalusham prasamīkshya gaṅgām ālīngito yamunayeva vibhāti kāṇṭhaḥ (Haravijaya 1, 39).*

Stars Scattered

Śiva's dance movement scatters stars to reach the moon in the bower of the *jaṭās* and helps the cool-rayed lunar crest to embrace his sweet-hearts with effortless ease, as they reach him helter skelter: *chūdājadāmśur api jūṭajaṭāni-kuñchabaddhāspadaḥ pratidiśam suchirād avāpa ārabdhanartanavarānilaghatyamānatārāpuramdhrīpa-rirambhasukhāni śāmbhoḥ (Haravijaya 2, 48).*

The scattering of the stars in the sky by Śiva as he dances, and the manner in which they originate and distribute themselves in the vast expanse of the sky is again the theme of poetic fancy. Śrī Harsha feels that the sky is decorated with bits of crystal rock, blown up from Mount Kailāsa, by the heavy impact of his feet upon it in rhythmic pats, as the Lord of Chaṇḍī dances at the approach of twilight: *sandhyā-vaśeshe dhṛitatāṇḍavasya chaṇḍīpateḥ patpatanābhi-ghātāt kailāsaśailasphaṭikāśmakhaṇḍairamaṇḍi paś-chātpatayālubhir dyauḥ (Naishadhīyacharita, 22, 15).*

Exactly the same idea is voiced by Mañkha in his description of the dance of Śiva, where the crystal particles from Kailāsa, raised by him during his movements in his evening dance sport, light up the sky, as it were, as stars: *nṛityadbhavapadakshuṇṇayatkshoṇireṇuvipru-shaḥ bhānibhena nabho nūnam naktam naktamupā-sate (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 4, 14).*

Śrī Harsha is not satisfied with this idea of rock splinters of Kailāsa making up the stars. He imagines that the huge garlands composed by bone pieces, that sway fearfully as Śiva

dances, get broken into bits, fly in different directions and twinkle as innumerable stars, the stars whose lord, the moon, is the crest ornament of Śiva. Sāyamnaṭa, the evening-dancer, moon-crested Śiva, decks the horizon with broken bits of his own ornamental wreath of bones torn asunder in dance, and appearing in the guise of myriads of stars: *bhūshāsthidāmnas trūṭitasya nātyāt paśyoḍukoṭīkapaṭam vahadbhiḥ diṅgmaṇḍalam maṇḍayatiha khaṇḍais sāyamnaṭas tārakarāṭkiriṭaḥ* (*Naishadhīyacharita*, 22, 8).

The *tāṇḍava* dance, accompanied by the shake of the head, suddenly scatters myriads of stars, as it were, in the sky, by jets of water of the deeply boisterous heavenly river, with its rollicking waves, and creates a fright in parts of the universe, as arise sudden blasts of tempestuous wind caused by the movement of the leg thrown up in dance: *mūrdhavyādhūyamana-dhvanadamaradhunīlolakallolajālodbhūtāmbhaḥkshodadambhāt prasabham abhinabhaḥkshiptanakshatralaksham ūrdhvanyastāṅghridaṇḍabhramibhavarabhasodyannabhasvatpraveśabhrāntabrahmaṇḍakhaṇḍam pravitaratu śivam śāmbhavam tāṇḍavam vaḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, p. 10, 155).

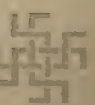
Yet another fancy of a poet makes the stars, peeping out at the approach of evening, drops of the celestial stream thrown up from the locks of dancing Śiva. Subandhu feels that the stars shine forth, scattered like drops of the stream of Jahnu's daughter, wandering in the winding hollows of the mass of matted locks of Śiva, shaken by the fury of his twilight dance: *sandhyātāṇḍavaḍambarochalitamahānaṭajaṭājūṭakūṭakuṭilaskhalanavivartitajahnukanyāvāridhārābindavaiva prakīrṇāḥ* (*Vāsavadattā* (181), p. 173).

Bāṇa points yet another picture of the glory of the stars as Śiva dances. Śiva's *jaṭās* whirling in dance, appear to him a forest of *kuṭaja* or wild jasmine briars, scattering flowers in the form of stars in the sky: *nūtanoddhūtadhūrjaṭijaṭāṭavikuṭajakudmalanikaranibhe nabhashtalam stabakayati tārāgaṇe* (*Harshacharita* I, p. 6). As Śiva is Vyomakeśa, the spread of the *jaṭās* in the sky, occupying its vast expanse, with the stars as the decorative flowers making up his *kusumaśekhara*, is a very apt description. There is also the mention of the sky as the flower garden of Śiva, *pushkaram pushpavāṭī*, with the twinkling stars gathered therefrom to nestle on his sky-spread locks, while the netherworld is his jewel box, *bhūshāpeṭī bhuvanam adharam*, making the snakes that adorn him, denizens

of the under-world, come out of this very jewel box to adorn him, as anklets, bracelets, necklets and sacred thread.

And again the poet imagines that these stars, distributed all around in the vast expanse of the sky, glorify Śiva by garlanding him with stars as it were in his form as Ākāśa, as he dances against the red glow of the evening. Śiva as Mahānaṭa or the Supreme Dancer, meditates on the great goddess of Twilight, aglow with the crimson hue of red arsenic, though deficient as an accomplished dancer, and now dances perhaps in the glory of the (setting) sun, creating lovely flexions, *aṅga-hāras*, his body, the sky itself garlanded with stars: *mahānaṭaḥ kim nu samānurāge samdhyāya sandhyām kunaṭīm apiśām tanoti tanvā viyatāpi tāraśreṇisrajā sāmpratam aṅga hāram* (*Naishadhīyacharita*, 22, 7). The pun here is on the words *mahānaṭa*, *kunaṭī* and *aṅga-hāra*. *Kunaṭī* 'red arsenic' means literally 'bad dancer', which is contrasted with *mahānaṭa*, great dancer. The sky is one of the forms of Śiva. Evening being the time for Śiva's dance, he is described as dancing in his sky form, the twinkling of the stars being the rhythm of his dance. Devī or Īśā, the great goddess, the mistress of the worlds, bright in energy like red arsenic (*kunaṭī*) is deficient in dancing (*kunaṭī*), in comparison with Mahānaṭa the Premier Dancer, Śiva. Śiva dances in the evening, *sandhyā*, and adores Devī as the goddess Sandhyā, placing her on a throne to witness his dance. She is thus a great connoisseur of his dance as seen in the *Pradoshastava*. But in a challenge to Śiva she cannot hold her own against Śiva, the embodiment of Dance itself. This recalls the numerous incidents in Chidambaram, Tiruvālaṅgādu and other places of Kālikātāṇḍava and Gaurī-tāṇḍava, where the triumph is Śiva's and the defeat Devī's. This is particularly interesting as Śrī Harsha refers, in a veiled manner to the *chidākāśa* form of Naṭarāja, the great Dancer at Chidambaram.

It is of special interest to recall how touchy artists in any field of fine arts have been always, particularly dancers that had made a mark on the stage: *abhyadhikam dhṛiṣṭatvam prāyena hi śilpajīvino bhavati āśritanartakavṛitter viśeshato vijitaraṅgasya* (*Kuṭṭanimata*, 855). It is only Śiva, who by his eight mighty forms upholds the universe and has no special ego about it, that could be the one great dancer, Mahānaṭa, and yet welcome competition from other celestials.



The dark hue of the neck of Śiva, filling the quarters with a nocturnal gloom as of the night of the deluge, is relieved to an extent by the red rays from the crest gems, creating a starry firmament: *grāiveyakoragaphaṇāmaṇicha-kravālasandhyāruṇoḍṣabalam sthagayāmchakāra dīmaṇḍalam pralayakālanīśeva tasya kaṇṭhaprabhātimiranīlaruchis sphurantī* (Haravijaya 2, 47).

Ashes Scattered

The scattering of ashes as Śiva dances at eventide, almost creating the illusion of a white curtain behind him, is popular in literature: *īśānabhūtisañchaya iva sandhyochchalitaḥ* (Vāsava-dattā (32), text p. 148).

The hands in movement in Śiva's dance scatter a mist of sacred ashes, and shaking the world, as it were, in a wintry quiver, scatter petals of the lotus seat of Brahmā: *brahmā-sanāmburuham āhitasarvalokakampe vibhos śīśirakāla ivānukāre paryantabāhuvanadhūlanabhasmadhūlinīhārapatadalitachchhadasobham āsīt* (Haravijaya 2, 46).

Kshemendra has a picturesque fancy to describe the crests of many mountains covered with the ashes of Śiva, scattered on them from his many moving arms as he dances, which give them an opportunity for vieing with the snow-clad Himālaya that they now so well resemble: *tāṇḍave yasya dordandamaṇḍaloddhūtabhasmabhiḥ channas tuhiṇaśailena spardhām bibhrati bhūbhṛitaḥ* (Bṛīhatkathāmañjarī p. 2, 16).

Kālidāsa goes further to describe the efficacy of the sacred ashes, scattered from his body in his dance movements, which, though from the cemetery, so gather the perfection of sanctity, that with devotion they are smeared on their crests by the celestials to cleanse their sins: *tadaṅgasamsargam avāpya kalpate dhruvam chitābhasma rajovīśuddhaye tathā hi nṛityābhinayakriyāchyutam vilipyate maulibhir ambaraukasām* (Kumāra-sambhava 5, 79).

Mañkha echoes this idea of the supreme efficacy of the ashes in removing evil. Śiva, at the commencement of his dance, with his body in action, scatters clouds of ashes from his limbs, which, along with the waters of the heavenly streams on his head, splashed in all directions, seem to banish the calamities of the three worlds at once, even before they take shape: *nātyārambhe kshubhitam abhito yo dadhānas śarīram sarvāṅgebhyaḥ prasabham udayad bhasmanām reṇujālam paśchallokātritayavipadām drāg ivot-*

sāritānām dikshu nyasyatyamibhṛitaśīrassindhupāthas-sanātham (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 5, 51).

The Moon Slips

The moon, slipped from Śiva's head by its quick movement, and by the impact of the whirlwind of the movement of his hands in dance, looks like the skull fallen from its position: *tena vyalokyata valadbhujadaṇḍakhaṇḍachanḍānilāhativighaṭṭanaviprakīrṇam prabhṛashṭam ambaratalād vidhutottamāṅgavisrastasekharakapālādhiyendubimbam* (Haravijaya 2, 45).

The crescent moon of Śiva, loosened from the head, as it tosses about in dance, and caught on the shoulder, appears as if dispelling the darkness of the rays of the blue throat: *pīnāmsakūṭaghaṭitam galakālakūṭachchhāyānīśānu-saraṇārtham ivābhyupetam tenottamāṅgavidhutiśla-thamaulibandhavistrastam induśakalam bibharāmba-bhūve* (Haravijaya 2, 32).

Effect of Swift Movement of Hands and Feet

The hands, all thrown about in dance and filling the quarters, look like so many streams of Gaṅgā, issuing from his head and flowing towards the ocean: *tasyāstarishata navābhinaya-kriyāsu dikchakravālam abhitas sthagitāntarikshāḥ ambhodhimārgagamanābhimukhās śīrasthasindhupravāhanivahā iva bāhudaṇḍāḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 44).

With the arms in motion, the finger nails, emitting rays all around, create the illusion of divers crescent moons in the sky: *ārabdhanar-tanakarāṅgulikoṭībhāganishṭhyūtadīdhītīśikhālikhītā-chachhalekham tasyābhavat spuradanekasahasrasam-khyajihmāmṛitāmsūkalikāṅkam ivāntariksham* (Haravijaya 2, 38).

Śiva's upraised leg in *daṇḍapāda*, like that of Trivikrama, with the sun against its tip, appears like the holy pitcher of Brahmā, emptying water on it: *lakshmīpater iva nirargaladaṇḍapādaśākhāgrakoṭīghaṭitaḥ kṣaṇam ushṇaraśmīḥ tasyābhābhavadhinabho'rghajalāvasaktapadmāsanānamitaratnakamaṇḍaluśrīḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 43).

The disc of the sun itself is almost covered up as the hands in dance movement scatter cliff tops powdered to smithereens, which, together with the ashes on his body, completely screen the sky: *dordandamārutavighaṭṭitaśailakūṭadhūlichchhāṭāpātaladhūsaram ushṇadhāmnāḥ ud-dhūlanonmṛīditabhasmarajobhir aichchhad īśaḥ pramārsṣṭum iva bimbatalātadarśam* (Haravijaya 2, 42).

The movements of his hands in *aṅgahāras* and *karāṇas* swaying the lion hide, the claws of which gather the stars in the sky, help, as it were, the moon, the lord of the stars, seated in the bower of the red matted locks, to easily contact his sweet-hearts: *tasyāṅgahāarakarāṇā-kulabāhudanḍakhaṇḍāspadā sapadī kesarirājakṛittih tārās chakarsha karajais chaṭulīkadārachūdājushaḥ priyam ivodūpates chikīrshuḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 41).

The elephants of the quarters crouch in fear, and appear to escape in terror the sharp nails from the lion hide of Śiva, as it sways with the movement of his hands in dance: *tadbāhughūṛṇanavalanmṛigarājakṛittivajrāsīśātānakhakoṭimipāta-bhītaiḥ digdantibhis tvaritakuñchitajānupūrvakhar-vibhavadvikaṭakumbhataṭair viśhede* (*Haravijaya* 2, 40).

The *jaṭās* of Śiva present a beautiful picture during his *sandhyā tāṇḍava*, as the flame from the eye on his forehead tries to lick up the lunar crest on the head, and the *jaṭās* swirl around scattering ashes, dancing the moon, spilling the heavenly stream and loosening the coils of the snakes, causing the hide garment to slip: *sandhyātāṇḍavavitasya khaṇḍaparaśor avyājja-ganti jvalallālāṭākshipuṭodbhavānalaśikhālīdhendu-lekham śiraḥ bhraśyatkrīti chalanmahāhivigaladvyo-māpagāmbuskhalatkhāṇḍenduchchhaladachchhabhūti chaṭulabhrāmyajjaṭāsantatiḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 42).

The tumultuous dance of Śiva creates an impossible situation, swirling everything in space. The heaving sighs of the primal tortoise and Śeshanāga, as the earth is pushed down by the sportive treads of the dance feet of the moon-crested Lord, the upsurge of the ocean whose waters wash the sun and the moon, and the mountains tossed by the moving arms, rattling thunderously, really frighten the worlds: *helāpādaprapātānnamadavanibharākrānta-kūrmeśaśeshapṛodbhūtaśvāsavātochchhaladudadhipayo-dhautasūryendutāram bhrāmyaddossamghavegāpa-tadachalakuladhvānasamtrastaviśvam trailokyaiśva-ryakārī dyatu tava duritam tāṇḍavam chandramauleḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 97).

Śiva's hands whirl so much that there can be no count of how many they are, and in what different positions to answer the musical rhythm, except the red, white and dark streaks of the eye, the laughter and the hue of the poison on the neck, respectively faintly discerned: *uttānāḥ kati vellitāḥ kati rayād ābhugna-madhyāḥ kati kshiptokshiptavikuñchitāḥ kati bhujās tauryatrikānukramāt kalpānteshu mahānaṭasya jha-*

ṇīti prakrāntachakrabhramibhrāntau kevalam agnihā-sagaralair lekhatrayam pātu vaḥ (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 98).

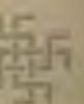
Śiva, even in such a boisterous dance, is himself bewildered by the tumult of the celestial nymphs, frightened by the enveloping of the universe by the seven seas, lashed into fury by the blasts of the hissing snakes, rendered uneasy as the *jaṭās* swirl with the rapid movement of the velocity of the waters of the Ganges during the *tāṇḍava* dance: *pāyād vas suradīr-ghikājalarayabhrāmyajjaṭāmaṇḍalīvegavyākulanāga-nāyakaphaṇāphūtkāravātochchhalat saptambhonidhi-janmachanḍalaharimajjannabhomaṇḍalagrāsatrāsta-surāṅganākakalakakṛīḍāvilāksho haraḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 99).

Skulls Vivified Chant Laudatory Hymns

The skulls that Śiva wears, whether as ornament on his crest or as long garland on his neck, dance along with his movements in *rechakas* and *aṅgahāras*. As ambrosia, spilt from the moon, revivifies them, they commence a weird Vedic chant, creating a picture of wonder. The arms of Śiva, vying with the moving waves of the celestial stream, occupy the entire expanse of the quarters in their *aṅgahāra* movements, spill lunar drops which animate the skulls composing his garland, enabling them to pose rhythmic waves of glances in assonance with the bodily sway: *nirvighnam ghanasārasāraviśadasvarlokalollolinīkal-lolapratimallabāhuchalanair vyāptāntarāśrīyaḥ śambhos sambhavadaṅgahāratatalottamsāmṛitāmsudra-vaprāṇatprāṇikapālachāpaladṛiśo hāsormayaḥ pāntu vaḥ* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 39).

As the dance continues and moon-crested Śiva nods his head in the joy he experiences thereby, the skulls, moistened by the ambrosia drops from the lunar disc shaken from its position as crest jewel, and heated by the flames sprawling from his eye on the forehead, surge into life and sing a hymnal chorus of his praise: *liptā lālāṇetrasphuradurudahanajvālajā-lapratāpottāmyatkoṭīrabhārasthiraśaśīśakalaprasnutā-bhis sudhābhiḥ antarṇṛityapramodaprachalitaśīrasas chandramauleḥ kapālāḥ kalyāṇam vaḥ kriyāsus stutim abhidadhatas tāṇḍavāḍambareshu* (*Saduktikarṇāmṛita* 64).

The skulls that chant the praise, are uncommon ones, those of the Brahmās of the previous aeons. Śiva alone dances eternally. In his case it is not a survival but existence itself, Eternity. It is all the other celestials whose



incalculably long life is but a drop in time in terms of eternity that only Śiva can represent. With a long slumber of death removed by the sprinkle of nectar from the moon on the crest of Śiva, squeezed by the tightened knot of the reptile string, the skulls of Brahmās of innumerable aeons, on the head of the Vanquisher of the Tripuras, start a Vedic chant in long hymnal compositions, in praise of his glory: *jayati bhujagarajjugranthinishpīditendusravadamṛitanivṛittapretabhāvaiḥ kapālaiḥ virachitanutibandho mūrdhni sadyaḥ purāreḥ pariṇatabahukalpabrahmanām brahmaghoshāḥ* (Saduktikarnāmṛita 63).

The poet Vāmadeva creates a more fantastic situation of several Brahmās of past aeons returned to life by the touch of ambrosia, going through their daily routine of ritual, each one in his own way, all the time that Śiva dances. Of the heads of Brahmā, vivified by the nectar of the crest moon melted by the flame of the tired hiss of the snake on the head of Śiva, dancing the tumultuous *tāṇḍava*, some chant the hymns *ṛiks* and *sāmans*, some dip in the waters of Gaṅgā, others meditate, while yet others offer oblations in the fire of the forehead eye: *pāyād vas sa śirāmsi tāṇḍavavidhau yanmūrdhni khinnoragaśvāsāgnidrutachūḍachandrasudhayā prāṇantyakasmāt vidheḥ ṛiksāme katichit paṭhanti katichin majjanti gaṅgājale svātmānam katichin mananti katichin netrānale juhvati* (Saduktikarnāmṛita 65).

Rechaka of Neck

Stirring up the bubbles of the heavenly stream, Śiva's *rechaka* dance movements, particularly of the neck, make the *jaṭā* appear as if tied up with the cast off films of reptiles, in the fashion of the hunter's hairdo: *uddāmarechakarayabhramaṇānubandhasambaddhabudbudakaṇakulasiddhasindhuḥ lakshmīm anujjhitakirātadaśāvanaddhanāgendrakāñchuka ivāsya babhāra jūḷaḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 39).

Śiva's Dance of Deluge also for Creation

The dance of Śiva is not merely a dance of deluge, but is also to create and bring into existence a new world, with the plans for it to be created afresh. Śiva's movement of hands in dance, scattering ashes, appear as if to lay the sketch plan, *sūtrapāta*, of a new world to come into being: *tena vyadhīyatatarām iva vellitāgradordaṇḍabhasmakaparājibhir ujjvalābhiḥ nirmitsyamānanijanrittabharābhiyogayogyāntarālabhuvanāntarasūtrapātaḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 37).

An almost similar picture is given by Soma-

deva in his description of Śiva as a wonderful creative painter of the universe, aglow with colourful hue (*rāgādhyā*), himself unattached (*arāga*): *arāgam api rāgādhyarachanāchaturam param haram navanavāscharyasargachitrakaram numaḥ* (Kathāsaritsāgara 68, 2).

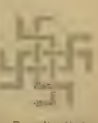
Weird Effect of the Dance

So full of force and so weird is the dance of Śiva, with the hands thrown about, that it looks as if it were the Kailāsa mountain itself, with the Kalpavṛiksha on it, rudely shaken by a blast of destruction: *vyaktāṅgahāarakaraṇakramakīryamānadordaṇḍamaṇḍalatayā bibharāmchakārasamhāramārutavikampitakalpavṛikshakailāsaśailasādṛiṣīm śrīyam indumauliḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 36).

An anonymous poet, quoted in the *Subhāshitaratnakośa*, describes the *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva in full moon-lit twilight, his rhythmic *karaṇa* and *aṅgahāra* movements rocking the golden mountain Meru, with woods aloft and crescent moon swaying, creating the charming impression of wonder-struck earth's nod, with her hair and earrings swinging: *pāyāt pārvaṇasāndhyatāṇḍavavidhau yasyollasatkānāno hemādriḥ karaṇāṅgahāravalanais sārḍhendur āndolitaḥ dhatte'tyadbhutavismayena dharayā dhūtasya kāntatvisho lolatkuntalakūṇḍalasya śīrasas śobhām sa vo dhūrjaṭiḥ* (Subhāshitaratnakośa 4, 23). It may be recalled here that the special constellation Ārdra associated with the Dancing Lord and the most sacred day in the year in Chidambaram is on a full moon night.

The snake bracelets of Śiva, as he dances, seem to suck up the ocean by their deep breath, as if anxious to meet their kinsmen below in the netherworld: *pātālaveśmagatabandhudidṛikshayeva vikshipyamānamanibandhanabaddhasamsthāḥ tasya vyadhuḥ phaṇabhṛitaḥ phaṇachakramuktaphūlkāramārutaviśirṇajalān payodhin* (Haravijaya 2, 35).

The importance of the snake bracelet, which is Śeṣha himself, is made clear in a telling verse attributed to Vallana, where this vast expanse of earth, with its lofty mountains reaching the sky, encompassed by the seven oceans, surrounded by large islands all around, is made out to be only a speck as a reflection in the gem on its vast hood: *tādṛiksaptasamudramudritamahī bhūbhṛidbhir abhramkashais tāvadbhiḥ parivāritā prithuprithudvīpais samantād iyam yasya sphāra-phaṇāmanau nilayanānmajjatkalaṇkākrītis śeṣhasoḥpyagamad yadaṅgadapadam tasmai namas śambhave* (Subhāshitaratnakośa 4, 9).



The movements of his hands in *aṅgahāras* appear like the waves of the milky ocean, circling above, as when it was churned: *tasyāṅgahāra-valitātānunnittahastabhasmāṅgarāgadha-valonnapīnabāhvoh sāvartachakravikaṭormighaṭāsa-hasrasamkīrṇadugdhajaladhipratirūpatāsīt* (*Haravijaya* 2, 30).

Śiva's ash-smeared hands, moving wave-like in the sky, create the illusion of the milky ocean embracing the swelling streams of many a Gaṅgā: *saṁdehitā dhavalabhāsmānadhūlidigha-taddordrumānilarayoddhata-vichibhaṅgāḥ dugdhoda-dher nabhasi paprathire muhūrtam ālīngitātānuta-rotkalikābhraṅgāḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 34).

The third eye, emitting red rays as he dances, tinges red the blossoming tips of his fingers, making them look like lotus petals, as they move in gesticulation: *tasyordhvalochanamārīchimoto viśīrṇapīṅgatviśhas chiram abhāvitarām puras-tāt ābaddhavartanatayā vikaṣatkarālaraktāṅgulīdala-kulaiḥ karapadmakhaṇḍaiḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 33).

Almost as picturesque as this fancy of Ratnākara is the description of an unknown poet of Śiva's whirl movement in dance creating an *alātachakra*, a flame circle. Śiva's dance is graceful, whirling, a circle of fire, a fine wheel, composed of fierce-rayed stars by the tempest of his moving arms, the earth sinking, flames and mountains leaping up, the headgear shaking with moon aglow, the eye-flame leaping forth, and the Ganges cascade noisily falling: *pāyādvārendumauler anavaratabhujāvrit-tivārtormivegabhrāmyadrudrārkatārāgaṇaracitamahā-lātachakrasya lāsyam nyañchadbhūtsarpadagniskha-ladakhilagirivāṅgaduttālamaulispūrjachechandrām-śuniryannayanaruchirasajjāhnavīnirjharam vaḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnakośa* 4, 29).

There is another arresting picture of a similar situation. The movements of the limbs of Śiva in *tāṇḍava* dance almost create a complete disc of the moon, caught on the crest, a circle of sparks of fire from the eye on the forehead, a whirlpool of deluge by the inflow of the celestial stream into the deep ravine of his bound-up hair, *kaparda*: *yasyām maulimila-tsudhāmsukalayā sampūrṇabimbāyitam bhālāvas-thitalochanena sahasaivālātachakrāyitam āvartāyitamākāpardam amarasrotasvatidhārayā pātutrinī jaganti khaṇḍaparaśos sātāṇḍavāṅgabhrāmīḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, p. 10, 153).

Gaṅgā as Curtain Background

Along with Śiva's dance movements in

aṅgahāras, *karāṇas* and the tossing of the head, there is the stream of the Gaṅgā splashed out as a curtain background: *vikshiptabāhunivahasya vihasya dikshu tasyāṅgahārakarakramakampimūrdhnaḥ agrātipātīsalilā surasindhur āpachchināmsukojjvalatiraskarīṇīvilāsam* (*Haravijaya* 2, 27).

Velocity of Dance Movements

The splash of the Ganges and the moon tossed up, along with the swaying skulls, and the uneasy movement of snakes, elaborately described by Ratnākara, is almost epitomised in a word picture in the verse attributed to Vīryamitra on the abandon of Śiva in his *tāṇḍava* dance, where the Ganges leaps and the moon jumps, the garland of skulls sways as the wind roars in their hollows, and the tired snake chaplet loosens the red matted locks: *tvāṅgad-gaṅgam udañchadindusakalam bhraṣyatkapālāvalī kroḍabhrāmyadamandamārutarayaspārībhavadbhā-nkrīti pāyād vo ghanatāṇḍavavyatikaraprāgbhāra-khedaskhalad bhogīndraślathapiṅgalotkaṭajajātājūtam śīro dhūrjateḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnakośa* 4, 13).

This same picture is almost reiterated, with a further elaboration by Kshemendra, in his description of the *tāṇḍava* of the Lord of Chāṇḍī, covering up the three cities, Tripura, by a curtain as it were by the rolling waters of the oceans agitated by the storm raised by his hands in motion, the Ganges swaying, the moon flying up, the skull quivering and the large snake anklets hissing: *tvāṅgadgaṅgam udañchadindusakalam vellatkapālākulam pāyād vas śvasad-aṅgadorubhujagam chāṇḍīpates tāṇḍavam yasyod-bhrāntabhujaprabandhavalanāvātotsalatsāgarasphār-āmbhaḥpaṭalaiḥ puram paṭam ivāsaktam samātanvata* (*Bṛihatkāthamāñjarī* p. 114.1).

There is beauty seen by a poet in this picture of Śiva's dance, as the sporting movement of his two arms throw up mountains, the whirling of which produce a thunderous sound, frightening the world, the Lord of snakes rolling his hoods by the weight of his jumping feet, the rollicking moon on the dancing waves of the heavenly stream, close to the forest of *jāṭās*, pale pink-hued like a cluster of bees: *dordāṇḍa-dvayalīlayā chalagiribhrāmyattaduchchairavadhvā-nodbhūtajagadbhramatpadabharālolaṭphaṇāgryoragam bhṛīṅgāpiṅgajātāṭavīparisarodagormimālāchalachcha-ndram chāru mahēśvarasya bhavatām nīśreyese tāṇḍavam* (*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, p. 10, 151).

The *ārabhaṭī* of the *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva rattles the mansions of Devendra, scatters the ends of the *jāṭās*, composing the hair style of

Śiva in all the ten directions, loosens the garment of animal hide, the skulls of past Brahmās sway and break up the slopes of the Kailāsa mountain, as celestial maidens sing, and arrays of Siddhas and Gandharvas bow down in excitement: *chañchaddevendrakutyas chalitadaśadiśākīrṇakoṭīrakotyas samgāyatsvaradhūtyas sarabhasavinamatsiddhagandharvadhātyaḥ viślishya-chcharmapaṭyo vīgālitaśatapatrāsānodyatkarotyas trutyatkailāsatatyas tripuravijayinah pāntu mām ārabhatyaḥ* (Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra, p. 10, 160).

At the end of the dance, Śiva has a kaleidoscopic effect of colour on his body, and, surrounded by his impish Bhūtagaṇas, looks the very picture of disorder, with the fire scattered somewhere, Pārvatī herself frightened somewhere in a corner, the skulls scattered all over, the heavenly stream splashed all about, the *jaṭās* dangling somewhere in all crooked shapes, the poisonous snakes crawling about elsewhere, the deadly poison spilt here and there: *kvāpyagniḥ kvachid adribhūr naraśiraḥkīrṇā kvachin-nimnagā rūkshā kvāpi jaṭā kvachid vishadharā raudram visham kutrachit tādṛigbhūtagaṇair vṛto mama chitābhasmormikirmīritas samsāre pratimuchya yātur apunaryogāya panthās śivaḥ* (Saduktikarṇāmṛita 23).

A Pause

The finale of such a terrific dance, leaving all there almost dazed by the terror of sure annihilation, in such an impossible whirlwind of movement, is pictured by yet another anonymous poet who paints the picture of the Dancer of violent *ārabhaṭī* at the end of the aeon, where the accoutrements offer their greetings to one another on survival, when at long last there is calm again, by exclaiming in kind enquiries 'Oh moon digit, hope all is well! Oh heavenly stream, all auspicious! Oh garland of skulls, is all prosperous! Oh entwining snakes, hope you are flourishing! Oh bundle of locks, glad you are hale and hearty!' *bhadram chandrakale śivam suranadi śreyah kapālāvale kalyāṇam bhuja-gendravalli kuśalam viśve śaśāsantate ityāhur militāḥ parasparam amūr yasmin praśāntim gate kalpāntārabhaṭīnaśasya bhavatāt tad vaḥ śriye tāṇḍavam* (Subhāshitaratnakōśa 4, 4).

A contrast is seen in the light-hearted attitude of the undaunted impish dwarf Gaṇas, who indulge in such antics as examining the skulls from the scattered garland of Śiva, to try their skill at identifying them. As the bound up *jaṭās* loosen by the tempo of Śiva's dance,

the garland of skulls on his head, scattered on the ground, is eagerly searched by the Gaṇas; and as in their eagerness, they lay their hands on Rāhu among the planets, the sun and moon smile, one at the other, causing thunderous claps of hands: *sandhyātāṇḍavaḍambaraṇayino devasya chaṇḍīpater bhrasṭāpīḍaviśīrṇamūṇḍachayanavyagrā gaṇāḥ pāntu vaḥ yair autsukyavaśīkṛitair grahagaṇād rahau grīhite haṭhāt sūryāchandramasor mithas smitavator jātam karāsphālanam* (Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra, p. 10, 148).

As an explanation of the device to identify the skulls by the Gaṇas, is given the nearly obliterated legends, incised in an obscure palaeographic alphabet mentioning the functions of the gods of past aeons, whose skulls form the adornment of the Great Dancer. This verse, attributed to Bhoja, in the *Subhāshitaratnakōśa*, and occurring in the royal poet's work itself as a literary illustration, describes Śiva eternal, wearing a garland of skulls of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Vāsuki, Kāma, Yama, Indra and others with illegible inscriptions on them 'he will create the universe, protect the worlds, rule the waters, lord the snakes, play with lovers, destroy the world, protect the heavens' and so forth, which the Gaṇas spell out: *sāntyai vo'stu kapāladāma jagatām patyur yadyam lipim kvāpi kvāpi gaṇāḥ paṭhanti padaśo nātiprasiddhāksharam viśvam sarakshyati rakshati kshitim apām īśishyate śishyate nāgai rāgishu ramsyate syati jagan-nirveksyati dyām iti* (Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa 4, 216).

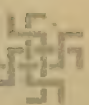
Dance Again

As Śiva contemplates commencing his dance, the fire of the eye colours the quarters crimson, reducing the sun to a lustreless circle and completely cutting off the screen of sunshine: *agre ninartishata eva vilochanāgnir asyāśu piñjaritadin-mukhachakravālaiḥ tigmāmsubimbakatakapatibaddhavṛttir archirbhir ātapatiraskariṇīm nirāsthat* (Haravijaya 2, 28).

Śiva's dance, resulting in the effulgence of the gems of the hoods of the snake ornaments dispelling darkness around, the moving hands splinter the rocky cliffs of the Lokāloka mountains which are the farthest limit of the sun's rays: *gāḍhāṅgadoragaphaṇāphaṇīraśmīrāgaruṅnādhakāranikarāparapārśvabhūmeḥ śailasya bhāskara-ruchām avadhes tadīyabāhudrumais sapadi chukshudire'śmakuṭāḥ* (Haravijaya 2, 26).

Abhinaya

The entire horizon is charged with the powder of the cliff tops as they are reduced to dust



by the movement of the hands in significant gesture, pregnant with the meaning of *abhinaya*: *ākshipyamānavividhābhinayaḥprabandhasandarśanārtham iva sarvadiśām purastāt vispaṣṭārechakarayākulabāhudaṇḍapishṭādrikūṭanikarān akarot sa mār-gān* (*Haravijaya* 2, 29).

Śiva's red lotus-like palms of the hands, swirling like the petals of the lotus of the universe, make the golden Meru, the spot of his dance, look like the seed vessel: *vistāraśālikanakāchala-bijakośachakrasya nṛittavalanāsu sahasrasamkhyaiḥ phullajjapāruṇatalair bhuvanāravindakośasya patra-pāṭalāyitam asya hastaiḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 31).

The use of *hastas* in *bhāvābhinaya*, to expound the meaning of the text and the *rasa*, and appropriate use of movements like *karaṇas* and *aṅga-hāras*, as a decorative element to enhance the charm of the dance as described by Damodara-gupta, may here be recalled: *sāttvikabhāva-nmilanam abhinayam anurūpavartanābharanam* (*Kuṭṭanimata*, 782).

The themes of all the *rasas* to be expounded by Paśupati Śiva are enumerated as *śṛiṅgāra* in relation to the charming face of the mountain princess Pārvatī, *karuṇa* at the hapless fate of Rati on the demise of Kāma, *vīra* in the heroic spirit against challenging Smara (Kāma), *bībhatsa*, by the bone ornaments on his crest and neck, *bhayānaka*, by the snakes with raised hoods on his body, *adbhuta* by his vast and immanent milk white form exciting wonder, *raudra* in the terrific overpowering of Daksha, *hāsyā* in his smile-provoking nakedness, and *śānta* in his eternal countenance of peace, an embodiment of all of which he is: *śṛiṅgārī giri-jānane sakaruṇo ratyām pravīras smare bībhatso'sthibhir utphaṇā cha bhayakṛinmūrtyādbhutas tuṅgayā raudro dakshavimardane cha hasakṛinnagnaḥ praśāntas chirād ittham sarvarasāśrayaḥ paśupatiḥ bhuyāt satām bhūtaye* (*Śṛiṅgāratilaka* 1).

These are moments of Śiva's terrific dance of *tāṇḍava*. But even when he is normally otherwise engaged, as for instance, when he moves as the charming beggar with the skull-cap in his hand, as *Bhikṣhāṇamūrti*, and begs for alms, his charming gait betrays his wonderful mastery over dance, as every step of his and every movement of his limbs bespeaks him as the *mahānaṭa*. Naturally, the damsels who come out to feed him, swear that he is not at all a beggar, but a *naṭa*. In his gait he betrays dance steps (Fig. 10), his words asking for *bhikṣhā* are melodious, his hand holding the beggar bowl engages in dance



FIG. 10. *Bhikṣhāṇa*, Chola, 11th century A.D., *Bṛhaddīvara* temple; *Taṇjāvūr*.

karaṇas, surely he is a *naṭa* and not a beggar: *nāṭye kṛitaśramam ivāsyā pade gatena dehīti dina-padam aṣyanuṣaṭkarāgam patrāvalambyapi karaḥ karaṇapravīṇaḥ prāyena kopi naṭa eva na bhikṣur eshaḥ* (*Bhikṣhāṇakāvya* 37, 8).

Among the later day poets, who have freely utilised the dance theme of Śiva in their *nāṭakas*, *kāvya*s and *chamṭūs*, some are very interesting indeed. In the long succession of princely poets, of whom Bhoja is so well known, Sarabhoji of *Taṇjāvūr* begins his *chamṭū* with a description of *tāṇḍava*. He offers a special tribute to Chandramaulīśvara, the Lord of Kāmakoti. Śiva Chandramaulīśvara dances, as the ambrosia from the moon, tightly bound up with the tawny *jaṭās*, drips into and falls with the spray of the streams of the Ganges, owing to the movement of his head: *nṛittārambhapiṇaddhapiṅgalaja-tāsamdamaṇishpīdanasnigdhonmrishṭakalankachandravigalatpiyūshadhārolbapaiḥ chañchanmastakanishpatatsuranadipūrair jagat pūrayan kalyāṇam vida-dhātu nas śubhakaras śrichandramaulīśvaraḥ* (*Ku-mārasambhava chamṭū* I, 1).

Another king, Immaḍi Devarāya, has a vigorous description of Śiva's terrific dance. The *tāṇḍava* paraphernalia of the victor of the Tripuras include such happenings as the earth sinking, the elephants and snakes upholding the agitated world, the stars torn asunder, the peaks of the ranges of mountains shaken falling, the water of the oceans scattered in all directions, all thrown in the sky, where celestial groups move: *bhraśyadvīśvambharāṇi bhrāmītabhuvanabhṛitkumbhikumbhīnasāni trutyattārāni liṅghadharāṇidharaśīraśśreṇīśīryadvishāṇi dikkīrṇodanavadambhas saradamarachamūchakraḥaṇchadvīyanti-nyasyantu vyāptadambhas tripuravijayinas tāṇḍavāḍambarāṇi* (*Mahānāṭakasūktisudhānidhi*).

Nārāyaṇa, a minister of Tañjāvūr, has a description of the dance movements of Śiva in a *champū* of his. The evening dance of Umā's consort with the *jaṭāmaṇḍala*, exceedingly beautified by the lotus pollen spread by the moving waves of the dancing stream of Gaṅgā, Śiva himself thus acts as the sun, brightening and helping the bloom of the mind lotus of the celestials, eager to witness his dance movements: *sāyam prastutachandātāṇḍavachaladgaṅgātaraṅgāvalīrīṅkhatpadmarajotivelakamila chchhrībhrījjāṭāmaṇḍalaḥ nṛitātōpavilokakautukajushām vaimānikānām manah-pathojātavikāsavāsaramaṇiḥ pāyād umāyāḥ patih* (*Vikramasenachampū*).

At the end of the 17th century, a poet, Appayjan, wrote a *champū* in which is an interest-

ing verse on Śiva's *tāṇḍava*. The extraordinary *tāṇḍava* flashes of Śambhu make the floor of the celestial region exceedingly cool by the ambrosia flowing from the disc of the moon, fallen into the stream of the heavenly river, violently shaken, the hoods of the sporting snakes, shaken by the thundering sound of the feet, almost blasting Talātala: *vegādhūtaviyattaṭipariluṭhatpūrenendubimbasravatpīyūshādhikaśītalikṛitabhūvas svarbhūmibhāgāntarāḥ pādākrāntiphalattalātalachalachakshuśravaśśīrshakās śambhos tāḍṛigamandatāṇḍavakalās śreyāmsi tanvantu vah* (*Gaurimayūramāhātmyachampū*).

Music and Dance

Another poet of the early 18th century, Vīrarāghava, has a *Nāṇḍīśloka* for his drama describing Śiva's dance. The joyous *tāṇḍava* of Śambhu, with his head adorned by the juvenile joy of the lilies (moon), to the accompaniment of the sound of the waves of the Ganges mingled with the tinkling of the anklets, is beautiful, by the song text rendered by the sound of the drum: *śambhos tāṇḍavam adbhutam kṛitavatas sānandam indīvarānandotpādakabālaśobhīśīraso gaṅgātaraṅgasvanaiḥ sammiśras charaṇāṅgadadhvanibhaṭais suvāhatau sūtratām ye dhakkādhvanayo vahanti bhuvi vah kshemāni kurvantu te* (*Rāmasāmṛājyābhishechanam*).

Śiva Nāṭyāchārya

Śiva is not only a great dancer himself, but he teaches others his great art, to make them profi-



FIG. 11. Group of Mātṛikās dancing with Śiva, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abaveri.



FIG. 12. Vāmadeva Śiva dancing, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Śiva temple, Nāchnā Kuṣhāra, Central India.

cient in it. His disciples in this art are so great that his competence as a teacher is at once heightened. He dances amidst Gaṇas and Mātṛikās to explain the intricacies. But as Śiva's speciality is *tāṇḍava*, he cannot but tread vigorously. The earth is therefore trampled down, and the hoods of Śeṣha crushed, with the gems on them scattered. This is indeed a very picturesque description. But Ratnākara cannot help saying how, even when Śiva only tries to here and there show the appropriate use of limbs in dance, every jerk of his has its own repercussion on the dance arena: *teshām puraḥ puraripau vishamaḥprayanṛittopadeśarabhasāt svayam ujjiḥāne pātālarandhram abhavannatabhūmipīṭhanishpishṭaśe-shaphaṇaratnakaṇāvakīrṇam* (*Haravijaya* 2, 23).

Even the Mātṛikās have thus to learn special difficult modes. It may be recalled that they are usually shown dancing with Virabhadra, and Gaṇeśa flanking them. This is another characteristic of this class of sculptures from Rājasthān. The tradition is very early and the earliest is a rock-cut sculpture from Maṇḍor in Rājasthān. From Abaneri, there is a long frieze showing a group of Mātṛikās, with Śiva as Virabhadra amidst them, all of them dancing (Fig. 11).

In the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, Somadeva specially refers to an incident in a story where a man witnesses a group of Mātṛikās under a tree at night, near the burial ground, awaiting Virabhadra, and on the arrival of Virabhadra, commencing their dance. A sculpture from Gujarat in the Junāgaḍh Museum shows a whole row of Yoginīs dancing. The cult of sixty-four Yoginīs is most interesting in this context. They are closely associated with the Mātṛikās. In fact, the Mātṛikās are counted among the Yoginīs; and the sixty-four Yoginīs, enumerated in the *Agnipurāṇa*, have all their representations in sculpture, very interesting iconographic forms in temples dedicated to them as at Saṭṇā and Bherāghāṭ.

Among the early sculptures from the Śiva temple at Bhumāra, there are many suggesting the numerous dance poses according to Bharata, demonstrated by the Pramathagaṇas themselves. It is most interesting to study the dance of these dwarf Gaṇa figures, which provoke a smile by the funny attitude, in which they arrange themselves in performing the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*. When Śiva presents himself as one amidst them, he almost chooses to be a democrat among democrats, dwarfing himself to their stature and appearing a Gaṇa himself, except for this difference, that he has four hands where the Pramathagaṇas have two. The sculpture of Śiva dancing from Nāchnā is specially to show him as Vāmadeva (Fig. 12), in which form he chooses to be a dwarf, and in a funny dancing attitude. His hair is specially arranged in ringlets all turned to the right, a favourite fashion in Gupta stone sculpture and terracotta. His main right hand is in *daṇḍa*, the corresponding left being in *abhaya*. He dances with his right leg raised almost in *ūrdhvajānu*, if not *bhujāṅgatrāsita*. The whole weight of the body rests on the left leg. Vāmadeva, one of the five forms along with Sadyojāta, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Īśāna, is here very suggestively made a compeer of the dwarfish Pramathagaṇas, as Śiva himself is Pramathādhipa or the lord of the Pramathagaṇas.

When Śiva demonstrates dance, naturally, this is witnessed with the utmost deference and desire to learn by the Pramathas and even the Mātṛikās. Ratnākara has a graphic picture of this situation. Śiva's demonstration of the nuances of dance, amidst all the Gaṇas for the benefit of the audience, is witnessed with rapt attention and unwinking eyes, Aindrī wishes for



herself a hundred eyes to fully gaze at it: *ittham tridhātmakekaraṇam gaṇamaṇḍalīṣu samkrāntim asya nayato sadasi sthitāsu paryāptadarśanasukham vini-meshapakshmachakshussahasram abhavat sprihaṇīyam aindryāḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 60). The commentary explains what is meant by the categories of dance. There are three—*lāsya*, *tāṇḍava* and *miśra*—which are explained in detail by Śiva: *tridhā lāsytāṇḍavamiśrabhedāt trividhātmanaḥ karaṇam nṛittam samkrāntim nayataḥ*.

He further explains, with individual reference to *karaṇas*, the mode of Śiva's exposition of a very difficult art. Śiva's dance, explaining to the assembled Gaṇas what are *karaṇas* that appeal, like *talapushpapuṭa*, etc., what are the modes of *aṅgahāras*, beginning with *sthirahasta*, with the use of *karaṇas* to make up these, is revealing: *etāni tāni talapushpapuṭādīkāni chetoharāṇi karaṇāni gaṇādhināthāḥ ityaṅgahāraavidhayas sphuṭatatprapañ-chayogāñchitasthitibhṛitas sthirahastamukhyāḥ* (*Haravijaya* 2, 59).

The commentator has gone at length into the definition of *talapushpapuṭa* and other *karaṇas*. As these *karaṇas* make up in their turn *aṅgahāras*, the various *karaṇas* that go to make up *sthirahasta* are enumerated according to the definition. The definition itself is significant as it proclaims that *sthirahasta* is the *aṅgahāra* which Śiva loves most: *sthirahasto bhaved eshu hyaṅgahāro hara-priyaḥ*. 'vāme pushpapuṭaḥ pārśve padō'gratalasam-charaḥ tathā cha samnatam pārśvam talapushpapuṭo bhavet' *sthirahastamukhyāḥ prathamō yesham te'nga-hāraavidhayo vidhīyamānā aṅgahārāḥ*. 'prasāryotk-shīpya cha samapādam prayojayet vyasitāpasṛitam savyam hastam ūrdhvam prasārayet' *ityālīḍham tataḥ kuryāt tathāiva cha nikuṭṭanam ūrūddhṛitam tataḥ kuryāt svastikotkshīptam eva cha. nitambam karihas-tam cha kaṭichinnam cha yogataḥ sthirahasto bhavedshu hyaṅgahāro harapriyaḥ* (Commentary).

There is a very interesting comment on the propriety of Śiva's use of *talapushpapuṭa* at the commencement of his dance, and fancy gives an explanation for the flowers scattered at his feet. The poet feels that the handful of flowers at the feet of Śiva at the commencement of dance scattered by the hisses of the gem-decked hoods of snakes, reiterate as it were, that there is none adorable to him who creates, upholds and destroys the worlds, by his varying three forms and qualities, encompassing them by his eight expanding forms: *devas traigunyahedāt sṛijati vitanute samharatyasha lokān asyaiva vyāpini-bhis tanubhir api jagat vyāptam ashtābhīr eva vandyo nāsyeti paśyanniva charaṇagataḥ pātu pushpāñjalir*

vas sambhor nṛityāvatāre valayamañiphañāphūtkri-tair viprakīrṇaḥ (*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra* 10, 159). Śiva cannot, but, at the commencement of his dance, use the *talapushpapuṭa* for scattering flowers. As in the *Kumārasambhava*, where Kāli-dāsa explains the object of contemplation of Śiva himself, who is beyond anything to be contemplated, himself being the highest, here in the act of dance, Śiva has to indicate to the world the proper sequence in dance performance. The poet, however, fancies that the snakes that bejewel him as necklace and bracelets, are so fully conscious of the importance of their Lord, that they cannot allow the adoration of any by their Lord, and just scatter the flowers by the breath of their hiss.

Śiva's exposition, individually to his pupils in this great art, is again very interesting. There is a striking sculpture at Mahābalipuram depicting how Śiva exercises Tāṇḍu in *nāṭya*. The dance steps are taught and closely watched, corrected or bettered as the case may be, by a



FIG. 13. Śiva teaches Pārvatī lāsya, Chāḷukya, 11th century A.D., Mādhava.

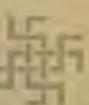




FIG. 14. Śiva exercising Tandava in dance steps, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahabalipuram.

preceptor of perfection to the most intelligent of disciples (Figs. 14, 15).

Devī herself, who is, undoubtedly, the best exponent of *lāsya*, and the counterpart of Śiva in the softer aspect of dance, Śiva being the repository of *tāṇḍava* or the terrific aspect of dance, is a dear disciple of her spouse—*priyaśishyā lalite kalāvidhau*, as Kālidāsa would have it. A verse attributed to Yogeśvara describes Śiva as the teacher of *lāsya* to Pārvatī (Fig. 13) in sweetsounding, yet drum-like thundering voice,

as he interposes, 'compose your fair arms thus, thus your posture, do not bend overmuch, bend your toes a little, look at me for a moment', clapping his hands for dance rhythm: *evam sthāpaya subhru bāhulatikām evam kuru sthānakam nātyuchchair nama kuñchayāgracharaṇau mām paśya tāvat kṣaṇam evam nartayatas svavaktramurajenāmbhodharadhvāninā śambhor vaḥ paripāntu nartitalaya-chchhedāhatās tālikāḥ* (*Subhāshitaratnaśa* 4, 31).

The effect of Śiva's lessons for Pārvatī, in even the more forceful expression of his own



FIG. 15. Śiva teaching the principles of nāṭya to Bharata, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Mahabalipuram.

tāṇḍava, that she excellently reproduces to his satisfaction, as she has Śiva's own movements as her guideline in her performance, is seen in a verse given by Mammaṭa. Devī's lifted leg in action, *daṇḍapāda*, in trying to imitate the dance of her lord, looks beautiful, like the lotus sprung from the well of her liquid iridescent beauty, her foreleg as stalk, scintillating rays from the nails as twirling filaments, the fresh red dye on the feet like expanding petals, the jingling anklets resounding like bees: *jaṅghā-kāṇḍorunālo nakhakiraṇaśatkesarālikarālaḥ praty-*

grālaktakābhaprasarakisalayo mañjumañjīrabhṛṅgaḥ bhartur nṛittānukāre jayati nijatanusvachchhalāvanya-vāpīsambhūtāmbhojaśobhām vidadhadabhinavo daṇḍapādo bhavānyāḥ (*Kāvya prakāśa* 7, 150). Here her quick *pādachārīs* are suggested by the picture of the scintillating rays from the nails and the crimson colour of the feet, moving fast like twirling filament and petals. The jingle of the *anklets* suggests the quick pace of the assured rhythm of the trained foot in dance suggestive of perfection in *tāla* and *laya*. Bhavānī's personal charm is a fulfilment of the essential qualities



FIG. 16. Devī dressing herself by adorning her ear with earring, adjusting her braid, looking into the mirror, and slipping anklets on her legs for dance, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abaneri.

of a good dancer, whose impeccable appearance and iridescent beauty add fragrance to the golden rose. The word *pratyagrālaktaka*, freshly painted dye, at once conjures up a picture of the meticulous attention to details of adornment—*āhāryābhinaya* to aid *āṅgika*, *sāttvika* and *vāchika*.

The *mañjira*, for the foot of Devī, with *kinḱinīs* added to jingle with her steps in dance, has an excellent representation in sculpture from Abaneri in Rājasthān where a Gurjara Pratihāra sculptor has created a telling picture of Devī, adorning herself in one case, and tying the *kinḱinīmālā* or string of tiny tinkling bells on her feet, just before stepping on to the dance arena (Fig. 16).

Śiva's teaching Gaurī, however, has been fancied by another poet, as a pretext to enjoy closer her company, as Devī, surely the repository of *lāśya*, should not abjectly depend on the instructions of Śiva, the greatest exponent of the art itself though he may be. The author of *Nṛīttaratnāvalī* feels that Śiva enjoys the touch

of the limbs of Gaurī, on the pretext of instructing her in the dance movements—the head with the braid wet, the breasts hot and heaving, the hips with wet garment clinging, the sides horripilating, the hands trembling, the feet quivering: *maulim svedajalārdrakuntalam uraḥ pūrvādhikoshastanam śroṇīm uchchhvasadamśukām pulakite pārśve prakampau karau sastambham charaṇadoṣam cha mudito gauryyās śivaḥ kautukāt tattannṛittakalochitāṅgakathanavyājais spṛīṣan pātu vaḥ* (*Nṛīttaratnāvalī* 1, 1).

There is an extremely fine painting in the Padmanābhapuram palace showing Śiva and Pārvatī, together practising dance steps. It is either a delineation of Śiva teaching Pārvatī perfection in dance steps, or it is mutual admiration of one the *lāśya* and the other the *tāṇḍava*. The glory of Devī's dance, particularly her exposition of *lāśya* and suggestive *abhinaya* conveying the *rasa*, is put in a charming verse by Mūka. The feet of Devī, a dancer with resounding anklets, charming, gladdening celestials, passion-filled, lovely in soft movements, suggestive of flavour and captivating, a whole chapter

of soft dance *lāsyā*, I pray may be portrayed on the stage of my mind: *manoraṅge matke vibudhajanāsammodajanāni sarāgavyāsaṅgā sarasamṛidusañchārasubhagā manoṅṇā kāmākṣī prakāṣayatu lāsyāprakaraṇam raṇanmañjirā te charaṇayugalinartakavadhūḥ* (*Mūkapañchaśatī* 2, 90).

It is this proficiency of Devī in *lāsyā* against the perfection of *tāṇḍava* in Śiva that accounts for the division of the two in the form of Ardhanārīśvara as Kālidāsa would put it in the *Mālavikāgnimitra*: *rudreṇedam umakṛitavyatikare svāṅge vibhaktam dvidhā*. This division of *tāṇḍava* and *lāsyā* in the same body has been charmingly justified in the *Saṅgīta-vidyāvinoda*. The ancient primal dancer appears resplendent with one half of his body charming by its feminine half, a division created by him, by his own enthusiasm to simultaneously perform the sportive dance of terrific *tāṇḍava* and soft *lāsyā*: *uddaṇḍatāṇḍavam udañchitalāsyāvilālam kartum svayam yugapad eva samutsukātmā vaḥ kāmīkalitakamratarārdhakāyas soyam vibhāti vibhur ādinaṭaḥ purāṇaḥ* (*Saṅgīta-vidyāvinoda*).

The high proficiency of Devī in *lāsyā* is used by her to convey her ideas to Śiva, when she wants to talk in a language not understood by her children. But baby Gaṇeśa dancing vigorously, but in broken steps, mimicking the *śṛiṅgāra* expressive *lāsyā* of Pārvatī, sportively sweet, performed in seclusion before Śiva, creates a delicate situation for his parents and rouses Śiva's smile: *devyā līlālītamadhuram lāsyam ullāsayantī yas śṛiṅgāro rāhasi purataḥ patyur āvishkrītas tam vīryānnṛitair vikaṭagatibhir vyañjayan kuñjarāśyas sambhoḥ*..... (*Nṛītaratnāvalī* 1, 3).

Śiva Witnesses Dance as a Rasika

Śiva is not only a great dancer and a great master of this art, which he expounds to others,

but is also a great witness and judge of others proficient in art. The eleventh century Udaipur *praśasti* of Udayāditya describes Śiva as the great witness of the dance of celestial nymphs, as Tumburu sings and Nandi sweetly plays the *Nāndī* drum: *sānandanandikarasundarasāndranāndinādena tumburumanoramagānamānaih nṛityantya-vaśyam anīśam surāvāsavyā yasyāgrato bhavatu vas sa śivas śivāya* (*Epigraph. Ind.* I, p. 233).

Kālidāsa gives a picture not only of Śiva, but Śiva with his consort Pārvatī, watching a dance drama with pleasing rhythmic movements of limbs, showing the moods of various flavours in different moods of expression: *tau sandhishu vyañjītavṛttibhedam rasāntareshu pratibaddharāgam apaśyatām apsarasām muhūrtam prayogam ādhyam lalitāṅgahāram* (*Kumārasambhava* 7, 91).

The appreciation by Śiva and Pārvatī of dance, well performed, has given a telling picture in a verse that distinguishes the former as a restrained though highly appreciative observer, but only suggesting his applause by his horripilation and verbal praise, while Pārvatī, being feminine, cannot help being more boisterous and proud of her son dancing *tāṇḍava* so well. Gaṇeśa's sudden *tāṇḍava* movements with excitement, manifest in his trumpeting, is appreciated by Śārvāṇī, clapping her hands, her moving bracelets jingling, Śiva himself as a spectator praising the performance, his hair standing on end almost announcing it, and sportingly also welcomed by the crested peacock mount of Skanda through its musical *kekā* notes: *śārvāṇīpāṇītalais chalavalayajhaṇatkāribhis ślāghyamānam sthāne sambhāvyamānam pulakitava-ṣṭhā sambhunā prekshakena khelatpichchālī kekākalakalakalitām krauñchabhidbarhiyūnā herambākāṇḍabṛimhātaralitamanasas tāṇḍavam tvām dhinotu* (*Subhāshitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, p. 10, 156).

NATARAJA IN HYMNAL LITERATURE

Onomatopoeic

Some of the most glowing pictures of forms of deity are given in hymnal literature. There are picturesque descriptions of the swaying form of Śiva in *tāṇḍava* in one of the best known hymns, the *Śivatāṇḍava stotra*, attributed to Rāvaṇa. Here, Śiva's dance in ecstasy is almost vividly conveyed to the ear by an onomatopoeic pattern of wording, making the hymn almost trot along to a rhythmic beat of steps and orchestral claps and sound of cymbals in consonance with the beat of the drum. The motion of the waves in a cauldron of *jaṭās*, as he dances in ecstasy, form a pattern, with a parallel in the flicker of the flames that dart up in elegant swaying curves of red glow, against the oscillating white background of Gaṅgā's water: *jaṭākāṭāhasambhramabhramannilimpanirjharivilolavichivallarivirājamānamūrdhani dhagaddhagaddhagajjvalallalāṭapattāpāwake kiśorachandraśekhara ratiḥ pratikṣhaṇam mama*. The scarlet glow, from lustrous rubies on the hoods of the snakes, entwining the scattered locks of Śiva in dance, appearing almost as smearing the faces of the quarters, personified as damsels, with a coat of liquid crimson glow, tinged by the dark amber tone of stately elephant hide, spread as a curtain background for the dancing deity, is another telling picture: *jaṭābhujāṅgapīṅgalasphuratphaṇāmaṇiprabhākadambakumkumadravapraliptadigvadhūmukhe madāndhasindhurasphurattvaguttariyamedure mano vinodam adbhitam bibhartu bhūtabhartari*. The onomatopoeic expression for delineating the crackling leap of flame, from the forehead of Śiva, to destroy the over-confident, flower-arrowed Cupid, also simultaneously rejuvenating him almost, by using all the three eyes to create the most picturesque pattern of decoration, with liquid musk, on the breasts of his beloved princess of the lord of the mountains, is a clever suggestion of the great *yogī* who is untainted by passion, but is yet the ideal lover and a divine painter: *karālabhālāpaṭṭikādhagaddhagaddhagajjvaladdhanañjayādharikṛitaprachandapañchasāyake dharādharendranandinikuchāgrachitrapatrakaprakalpanaikasilpini trilochane mātir mama*. Śiva's picturesque form in varied colours is given in another verse. Here Śiva himself, fair of form, with the poison in his throat, dark like the night, deprived of the light of the moon by a

dark mass of rain-laden clouds, wearing the sparkling white stream of the heavenly river on his tawny locks, rendered crimson by the dripping dark elephant hide clothing him, is a veritable abode of art, combining in himself a singularly striking composition of colours: *navinameghamāṇḍaliniruddhadurdharasphuratkuhūniśithinītamahṇprabandhabandhukandharaḥ nilimpanirjharidharas tanotu kṛittisindhuraḥ kalānidhānabandhuras śriyam jagaddhurandharaḥ*. The poet again fancies the blue on the throat of Śiva as simulating the charm of a full blown blue lily in all its glory. The line, onomatopoeic in resounding steps of the divine dancer, gives all his attributes, describing him as the destroyer of Cupid, the annihilator of the brazen castles, the end of birth and death cycles, the desecrator of Dakṣha's sacrifice, the vanquisher of the demoniac elephant and gloom and the extinguisher of death itself: *praphullanīlapaṇkajaprapañchakālimachhātāviḍambikaṇṭhakandharāruchiṇprabandhakandharam smarachchhidam purachchhidam bhavachchhidam mākhachchhidam gajachchhidāndhakachchhidam tam antakachchhidam bhaje*. Again picturing him as a bee, hovering over the sweet flow of honey from the bouquet of fine arts, personified in the form of the most auspicious and pleasant Devī, the poet uses the next line here to repeat in a verbal cadence Śiva's exploits as the destroyer of Cupid, of the three brazen castles, of the cycle of births and deaths, of the sacrifice, of the elephant and of the infatuated demon of gloom, and lastly of death himself: *agarvasarvamaṅgalākālākadambamañjarīrasapṛavāhamādhurivijrimbhaṇāmādhuvratam smarāntakam purāntakam bhavāntakam makhāntakam gajāntakāndhakāntakam tam antakāntakam bhaje*.

The next description is that of the fearful flames, leaping from the eye on the forehead, surging up in harmony with the beat of the drum, producing the auspicious thrumming sound, *dhimi, dhimi, dhimi*, to which Śiva dances in ecstatic abandon: *jayatyadabhṛavibhramabhramadbhujāṅgamasphuraddhagaddhagadvinirgamatkarālabhālāhavyavāt dhimiddhimiddhimidhvananmṛdaṇḍatūṅgamaṅgaladhvanikramapravartitaprachandātāṇḍavas śivaḥ*.

Another onomatopoeic stotra, *Śivastuti*, also

attributed to Lañkeśvara has a telling description of Śiva's *āhārya*—the important element of dress and make-up for dance. Śiva is an effulgent light, sporting a blue tint on his neck, displaying the crescent moon over his forehead, holding a skull cap in his hand, presenting the elephant hide on his waist line, and, more than all, dancing his long clusters of *jaṭās* in consonance with his own: *gale kalitakālimā prakāṭitendu phālasthale vināṭitajaṭotkaram ruchirapāṇipāthoruhe udāñchitakapālakam jaghanasīmni sandarśitadvipājinam anukṣaṇam kimāpi dhāma vandāmahe* (Śivastuti 1)

In another verse, there is a colourful picture of the lighting up of his frame and the quiver of light on the waves of the moving, heavenly stream on his locks. His three eyes, the moon (*kalākara*), the sun (*karākara*), and the flame lighting up, by turns, perennially night and day, his *jaṭās*, quiver and twinkle by their play on the waves of the heavenly stream: *uditvaravilochanatravayisṛitvarajyotishā kalākarakarākaraavyatikareṇa chāharniśam vikāsitajaṭāṭāviviḥaraṇotsavaprollasattarāmaratarāṅgiṇītaralachūḍam īde mṛīdam* (Śivastuti, 3).

Yet another verse describes the wild dwarf Pramathagaṇas, all of them comic in appearance, and, around Śiva, participating in his dance. Elsewhere, it is clearly given that it is Devī's beautiful glances, witnessing the dance, that transform this weird picture into something more sublime. But here the devotees, witnessing the dance of Śiva, note a stream of the denizens of heaven standing at the gate, making it impossible for Nandī to manage the crowd without applying the rod of authority even on the crest-jewels of the celestials themselves, which leaves them no choice other than to abandon even the desire for celestial prosperity and prefer to be around the Lord himself, even as the goblins that the Pramathagaṇas are, to witness his glory: *bhavadbhavandehalīvikaṭatuṇḍadaṇḍāhatitruṭanmukutaḥkoṭibhir maghavādādibhir bhūyate vrajema bhavadantikam prakṛitim etya paśāchikim kimityamarasampadaḥ pramaṭhanātha nāthāmahe* (Śivastuti, 5).

It is noteworthy that the ill-shaped impish Pramathagaṇas, in close proximity to Śiva, can even take minor liberties with their Lord, who is incomprehensible even to the other two great gods of the Trinity, Viṣṇu and Brahmā. This is almost voiced here in the wish of the devotees to be close to Śiva, even as the Gaṇas, if need be. Kāraikkālammaiṃ actually pre-

ferred transformation of her beauty into an ugly appearance to be eternally with Śiva and witness his dance.

The *Śivastuti* of Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita has a vivid picture of the several attributes in the hands of Śiva as he dances. This adds to the glory of the picture as given by Rāvaṇa. Śiva carries fearful weapons, the axe frightful, the trident comparatively softer, the drum loud in its sound, the flame darting up effulgent along with the gruesome weapon, *khaṭvāṅga*, all of bone and skull, and dances unaware of the mobile and immobile surroundings, as the fourteen worlds in amazement shout with one voice, 'victory to you! hail victory!' *kāthoritakuṭhārayā lalitaśūlayā bāhayā raṇaḍḍamarayā sphuraddharaṇayā sakhuṭvāṅgayā chalābhir achalābhir apyagaṇitābhir unnṛityatas chaturdaśa jaganti te jaya jayetyayur vismayam* (Śivastuti, 6).

In another hymn, whose composition is attributed to sage Patañjali, the onomatopoeic factor has a sustained effect. Here also, it is a sway in dance that is almost caught in the sound of words constituting the composition. The dancer of Chidambaram is described the sun that causes the lotus-mind of seers to bloom, the gem from the ocean of existence, with the lustre of the neck in charm exceeding a cluster of rain-laden clouds, sky-clad, fair like the *kadamba* flower, the finale of birth cycles, the abode of eternity, immaculate, the beautifying collyrium for the eyes of Patañjali, wearing bracelets, and anklets, jingling all the while in consonance with the raised and bent leg in dance. Here the jingling of the words, composed of significant letters, almost suggests a rapturous dance in consonance with the sound of the moving jewels: *sadañchitamudañchitanikuñchitapadam jhalajhalañchalitamañjukatakam patañjalidrigañjanam anañjanam achañchalapadam jananaḥḥaṇjanakaram kadamburuchim ambaravasam paramam ambudakadambakaviḍambakagalam chidambudhimaṇim budhahṛidambujaravim parachidambaranaṭam hṛidi bhaja*.

The dancer of Chidambaram, mentally contemplated, is described as the vanquisher of the Tripuras, who has the snake Ananta himself as bracelet, whose mercy is unbounded, is endless in eternity, whose foot raised in dance is sought by Brahmā, Indra and the whole host of devas, is moon-crested, whose foot laid low death itself, is smeared with ashes as the acme of decoration, the most ancient one, who outwitted Cupid, but is ever bountiful



to the devotee: *haram tripurabhañjanam ananta-kṛitakaṇkaṇam akhaṇḍadayam antarahitam viriñ-chasurasamhatipurandaravichintitapadam taruñcha-ndramukuṭam param padavikhaṇḍitayamam bhasita-maṇḍitatamam madanavañchanaparam chirantanam imam prañatasañchitanidhim parachidambaranāṭam hṛidi bhaja*. He is the universal protector, the very crest of all the highest qualities on earth, but yet devoid of ego, the moon-crested, his locks eagerly holding a whole crest of waves of the heavenly stream, the destroyer of ego, of death itself, the finale of the cycle of births, the auspicious, whose numerous arms flow out in dance in different directions, in whose hands nestles the fawn, the protector of all, the destroyer of sins, whose eyes are the moon, the sun and fire: *avantam akhilam jagad abhañgagu-natuṅgam amatam dhṛitavidhum surasarittarañ-ganikurumbadhṛitilampatajaṭam śamanaḍambara-haram bhavaharam śivam daśadigantaravijṛimbhitaka-ram karalasanmṛigaśiṣum paśupatiṁ haram śaśidha-nañjayapataṅganayanam parachidambaranāṭam hṛidi bhaja*. The divine dancer's orchestra is graphically described in the lines composing the verse in onomatopoeic intonation, assuring the time beat for the dance with an almost re-sounding jingling. The dancer of Chidam-baram, bejewelled with bracelets, anklets, tiny little gem-studded bells, tinkling in assonance with the drumbeat of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, to the sound of which the feet proceed in dance steps, is surrounded by the peacock-vehicled Skanda, bull-faced Nandī, elephant-headed Gaṇeśa, skeleton-like Bhṛṅgiriṭi and a whole host of devotees, like Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and so forth, reverently adoring his raised foot: *anantanavaratnavilasatkaṭakakiñkiṇi-jhalajhalañjhalavaravam mukundavidhihastagatamar-dalalayadhvanidhimiddhimitanartanapadam śakun-tarathabarhirathanandimukhadantimukhabhṛṅgiriṭi-samghanikaṭam sanandanasanatpramukhavanditapa-dam parachidambaranāṭam hṛidi bhaja*. Stress on his Tripurāntaka aspect is laid in a verse, descriptive of his attributes, where he is eulo-gised as devoid of an origin, whose chariot is the earth itself, whose bow is the golden hill with its string composed of the lord of snakes, engaging his hands with a large battle axe, a fawn and a drum, whose sharp arrow is Viṣṇu himself, and the Vedic texts themselves the steeds yoked to his chariot, whose companion is Chaṇḍikā, who has no peer, but showers unfailing boons on his devotees, whose destruc-tion of the Tripuras was just in a trice: *ajam kshitiratham bhujagaṇaṅgavaguṇam kanakaśṛṅgi-dhanusham karalasatkurāṅgaṇṇihukam paraśuru-chikukumaruchim ḍamarukam cha dadhatam mu-*

kundaviśikham namadavandhyaphaladam nigama-vṛindaturagam nirupamam sachāṇḍikam amum jhaḍiti samhṛitapuram parachidambaranāṭam hṛidi bhaja.

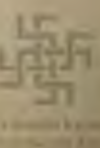
Śaṅkara almost goes into ecstasy, experienc-ing, perhaps, the sound of the beat of the orchestral drum for Śiva's dance, which ono-matopoeically he repeats: *jhaṇutakajhamkiṇu-jhaṇutatkiṭatakaśabdair naṭasi mahānaṭa bho sām-basadāśiva śambho śankara śaraṇam me tava charaṇa-yugam* (*Suvarṇamālā stotra* 24). O Lord, the great dancer! you dance to the sound of *jhaṇutaka jhamkiṇu, jhaṇu, jhaṇutat, kiṭatak, kiṭakak*.

A verse from another hymn graphically describes the dance of Gaṅgā from her reposi-tory, the swirling locks like tawny lightning flashes, as Śiva himself dances in the lotus of the devotee's heart, as Śaṅkara puts it. Here is a peculiar reference to Chidam-baram itself as Chidam-baram is Puṇḍarikapura, the lotus town: *mahāpuṇyapāke manahpuṇḍarīke sadā sam-vasantam chidānandarūpam tatitpuñjachañchajjaṭā-jūṭavāṭinaṭajjahnukanyātatiṇyāsametam* (*Sāmbasadā-śiva bhujāṅgaṇṇayāta stotra* 5.6).

The particular mode of dance of Śiva in the south, which is known as *ānandatāṇḍava*, which, however, is strictly *bhujāṅgaṭrāsita* and asso-ciated especially with Chidam-baram, which is also the lotus of the heart, is specifically mentioned in the *Śivāpadānagadyastotra* of Nila-kaṇṭha Dikshita: *ānandatāṇḍavanāṭanānubandha . . . hṛidambujakṛitavilāsa chidambarakṛitanivāsa . . . nīlakaṇṭhamakhinihitakārunya . . .*

Poetic Fancy

The South Indian feature of Naṭarāja, trampling Apasmāra, is stated by Śaṅkara in his *Śivānandalaharī*. He is very much concerned about the pain experienced by the tender feet of Śiva as he stamps on Apasmāra, not less painful than when he kicked the chest of Yama to chastise him. This pain, he feels, is equal to the experience of walking on the rocky slopes of the Himālayas, or of his feet rubbed by the crown-tips of myriads of celestials bowing low, and hence he requests that such hard exercise for his tender feet should be avoided, and he should sojourn in his heart on jewelled sandals: *vakshastāḍanam antakasya kathināpasmārasammār-danam bhūbhṛitparyāṇanam namatsuraśiraḥkoṭīra-saṅgharshaṇam karmedam mṛidulasya tāvakapadad-vandvasya kim voचितam machchetomaṇipādukāvīha-raṇam śambho sadāṅgikuru* (*Śivānandalaharī* 64).



Śaṅkara, however, presumes that Śiva should have a reason to dance on the hard surface of rocks and concludes that, in his great mercy, he tires his tender feet on a difficult surface to enable him to dance in my heart, which, in anticipation of my birth, he knows would be adamant; otherwise when there are flower-strewn dance halls in the most elaborate celestial mansions, why should Śiva dance on mountain slopes: *eshyatyesha janim manasya kathanam tasmin naṭānīti madrakshāyai girisīmni koma-*

lapadanyāsaḥ purābhyāsitaḥ no ched divyagrihāntareshu sumanastalpesu vedyādishu prāyas satsu śilātaleshu naṭanam śambho kim artham tava (Śivānandalaharī 80).

Śaṅkara devoutly concentrates his attention on the forehead of Śiva, a stage for the sprightly movement of his third eye, which is itself a dancer, almost appearing to dance through the movements of the pupils, and appearing a veritable *tilaka* mark, with bright effulgence

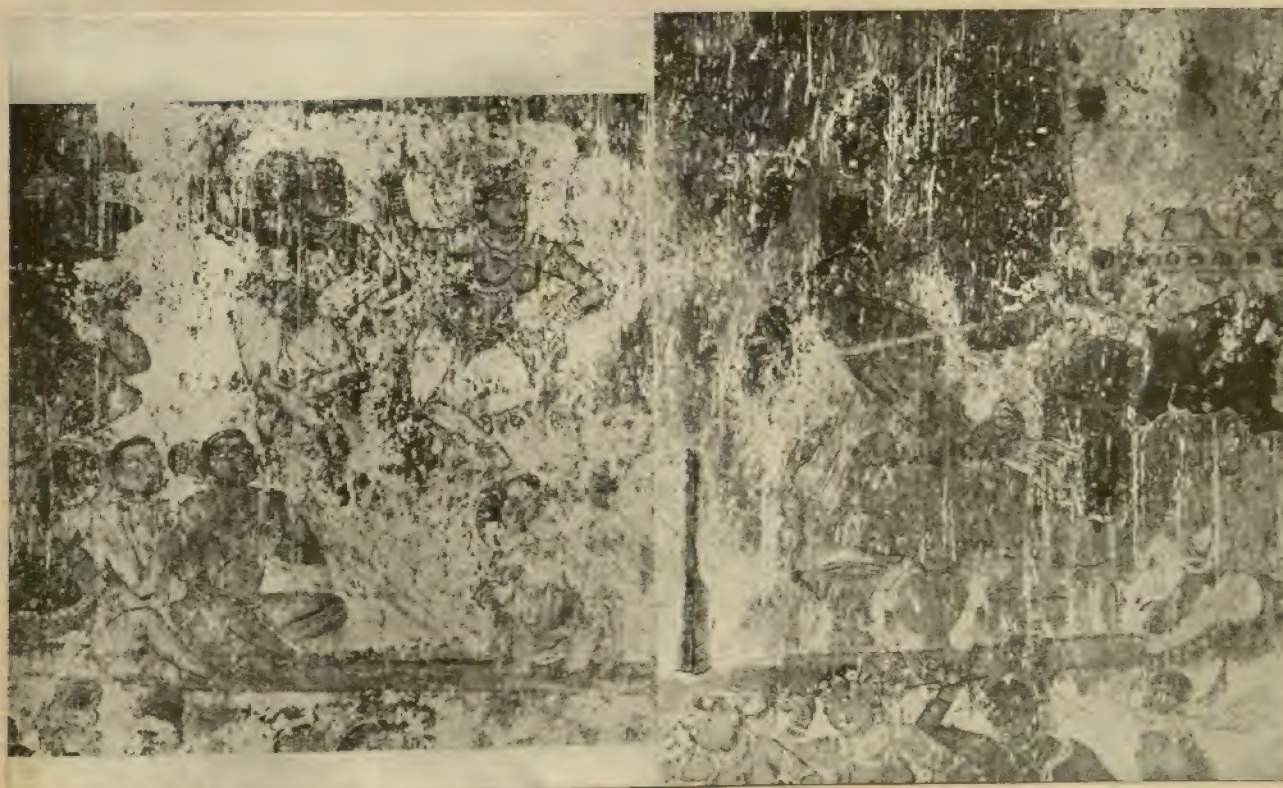


FIG. 1. Line drawing clearly indicating the composition of the painting illustrated in Figure 2.

FIG. 2. Śiva seated in Kailāsa watching a pair of dancers, below is a row of dancers and musicians sailing along with the clouds. Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tanjāvūr.



FIG. 3. Continuation of the painting illustrated in Figure 2. A row of dancers and musicians, another dancer further down, Cheramān hurrying to Kailāsa on his horse, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Brihadīśvara temple, Tanjāvūr.

eclipsing the charm of even the moonlight from his crest-jewel: *yasminnardhendumugdhadyutinichayatiraskāranistandrakāntau kāśmīrakshodas-aṅkalpitam iva ruchiram chitrakam bhāti netram tasminnullilachillīnaṭavarataruṇilāsya raṅgāyamāne kālāreḥ phāladeśe viharatu hṛdayam vītachintāntaram naḥ* (Śivapādādikeśāntavarṇanastuti 31). It may be recalled that the movement of the pupils in the eye of the dancer conveys the mood of dance suggesting *bhāva abhinaya*, *chakshurbhīyam darśayed bhāvam*. The phrase, *chillīnaṭavarataruṇilāsyā*, is very significant. Very important in this context is the line of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, describing the essentials of dance, i.e. the song, the ideas, the feelings and the rhythm, are to be respectively sustained by the throat, expressed by the hands, conveyed by the eyes, and kept up by the feet (see p. 16).

Śaṅkara extolls Śiva's benevolent nature and adores him for having chosen to adorn himself

with the crescent moon. He thus explains the significance of the moon on the Lord's crest. Śiva adored is so easily pleased that, kind-hearted, he holds upon his head even the crooked, tainted and benumbed (lit. foolish, wet) moon and this is almost an exhortation to others: *vakrākāraḥ kalaṅki jaḍatanur aham apyañghrisevālubhāvād uttamsatvam prayātas sulabhataraghṛiṇāsyandinas chandramauleḥ tat sevantām janau-ghās śivam iti nijayāvasthayaiva bruvānam vande devasya śambhor makūṭasughaṭitam mugdhapiyūsha-bhānum* (Śivapādādikeśāntavarṇana stotra 34). He also attributes it only to the kindness of Śiva that he almost accedes to the request of Yamunā to accept her, also, on his locks, like Gaṅgā. This is a fancy. Śiva's *jaṭā*, half of which is a dark braid in his Ardhanārīśvara form, creates an illusion as to whether, kind-hearted, he had granted the prayer of Yamunā, to hold her up also, like Gaṅgā, on his locks: *svāmin gaṅgām ivāṅgikuru tava śirasā māmapiyār-*

thayantīm dhanyām kanyām kharāmsos śirasi vahati kinvesha kārunyaśālī ittham śaṅkāṁ janānām janayad atighanam kaiśikam kālameghachchhāyam bhūyād udāram tripuravijayinas śreyase bhūyase naḥ (Śivapādādikeśāntavarṇana stotra 32).

Śiva Connoisseur, Dancer, Dance Master

Śiva is not only a great exponent of dance but is also a great witness of the art as a connoisseur. He listens to music and observes the movements of danseuses in dance. A beautiful painting in the Bṛihadīśvara temple shows him in this attitude (Fig. 1-4). Śaṅkara gives a picture of the dancers in action in Kailāsa, the jewels jingling, sweet songs enthralling the atmosphere, movements of hands and regular beat of the feet, expressing idea and rhythm, while significant glances suggest moods: *svargaukassundarīnām sulalitavapushhām svāmīsevāparānām valgad-bhūshāṇi vaktrāmbujaparivigalanmugdhagītāmritāni nityam nṛittānyupāse bhujavidhutipadanyāsabhāvāvalokapratyudyatprītimādyatpramathanāṭanāṭidattasambhāvanāni (Śivapādādikeśāntavarṇana stotra 37).* This is exactly as given in the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*. There are *rechitas*, *chārīs*, *aṅgahāras* and *bhāvābhinaya* suggested here. In the next verse, the line, *amṛitam ivāsvādyamānam śivābhyām*, gives the picture of Śiva and Pārvatī witnessing this glorious dance to the beat of the *muraja* drum.

In the *Bhīmeśvarakhaṇḍa* of *Skāṇḍapurāṇa*,

there is a hymn wherein the peculiar activity of Śiva as a dance master and a dancer, is clearly explained in a few verses. The salutation is to the Lord who transcends the universe, and regulates its order, and like a stage manager controls the entire dance of life, in every little motion of creatures on earth: *viśvasya cheshtāstvakhilasya yena yantrasya lāsyam bhuvi yantriṇeva viśvādhikam sarvaniyāmakam tam vināham anyam na bhajāmi daivam (Bhīmeśvara stotra 33).*

Though not easily visible, like a dancer behind the screen, he is seen slowly but surely and clearly by seers through divine sight, in spite of the existence of the curtain of wisdom, which cannot allow an insight: *satyām api tvam sphuṭam ikshyase dhītiraskarīnyām sudṛiṣṭā krameṇa paṭo janeneyanakautukena tiraskarīnyantarabhāg ivaśa (Bhīmeśvara stotra 45).*

The idea in *Bhīmeśvara stotra* is echoed in another, the *Śivaśataka*, where Śiva is described as a dance master, a marionette manipulator, the *sūtradhāra* of *prakṛiticharita*. The theme is the behaviour of the universe. The devotee promises to become subservient to the Lord as an actor and gives him full freedom to cast him in different roles: *naṭa iva vaśato bhavāmi yāsāmahamapahastitasārvabhūtapūrvah prakṛiticharitanāṭyasūtradhāra bhramayasi mām iyatishu bhūmikāsu (Śivaśataka 12).*



FIG. 4. Details of dancers and musicians in a row in the painting illustrated in Figure 2 and 3, Chola, 11th century A.D., Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tanjāvūr.

He is also described as a dramatist, deftly weaving the drama. For him, the poet who composed the *Vedas*, it is not very difficult to create a drama, as *nāṭya* itself was created by Brahmā, out of essential parts taken from the four *Vedas*. Often changing the acts, bringing in and dispersing actors on the stage, thus animating or depleting the stage itself, with interludes, unnoticed from start to finish, is a great drama composed by the poet of the *Vedas*: *asakṛd udaramadbhir aṅkabhedair naṭagaṇanishkramaṇād viviktaraṅgaḥ aviditamukhasandhir āmukhānto nigamakaves tava nāṭakaprabandhaḥ* (*Śiva-sāta* 54).

The glory of Śiva's dance, where his orchestra is mainly composed of the highest celestials, like Brahmā and Viṣṇu, is described, and Śiva is addressed as the vanquisher of the Tripuras. He dances, attended by Puruṣhotama (celestial par excellence, i.e. Viṣṇu), and others holding different musical instruments, like the *mṛdaṅga* drum and others, creating the illusion of stars in the firmament by the drops of the celestial stream Gaṅgā, scattered from the *jaṭās* in motion, faintly, whitening the horizon of the universe: *surair mṛdaṅgādīdharaiḥ purāre tvam sevyamānaḥ puruṣhottamādyaiḥ naṭasyudubhrāntīkarābhṛagaṅgāpāthaḥkaṇāpaṇḍurapaḍmajāṇḍam* (*Bhīmeśvara stotra* 53).

Difficult Dance

In the *Śivamahimnastotra*, Pushpadanta describes very vividly the terrific dance of Śiva, which almost rends asunder the universe. He wonders whether Śiva really dances for the welfare of the universe, to protect it as it is always understood, considering the tremendous impact of his dance on the earth and sky. The Lord, by the play of his feet, almost makes one wonder whether the earth would not break asunder, the sky, with the planets, almost injured by hands in motion, the surface of ether, lashed by his swirling *jaṭās*, appears rent. Is it for protecting the universe that he dances? Surely, supreme suzerainty as his is indeed eccentric: *mahī pādāghātād vrajati sahasā samśa-yapadam padam viṣṇor bhrāmyadbhujaparigharug-nagrahagaṇam muhur dyaus dāussthyam yātyanibhṛitajaṭātādītatayā jagadrakṣhāyai tvam naṭasi nanu vāmaiva vibhutā* (*Śivamahimnastotra* 16). He also very graphically describes the huge form of Śiva which naturally causes this embarrassing picture of the dissolution of the universe as he dances. The entire stream of waters of the celestial river, foaming with particles of spray,

looking like a cluster of stars on the firmament, appears almost like tiny particles of water on his *jaṭās*; and when it is realised that the world itself, composed of continents, is just a clod of earth, surrounded by the ocean, the abode of water, one can well imagine the amazing majesty of his entire form: *viyadvyāpī tārāgaṇa-guṇitaphenodgamaruchiḥ pravāho vārām yaḥ prishataghu drishṭas śirasi te jagad dvīpākāram jaladhivalayam tena kṛitam ityanenaivonneyam dhṛitamahima divyam tava vapuḥ* (*Śivamahimnastotra* 17).

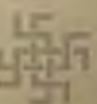
In another verse Śaṅkara clearly states that this circle is the *māyā*, or illusion, leading us to the Lord, directing us to *praṇava*, the happiest path of bliss. It is very interesting that Śaṅkara has in his mind the spiral that in that period composed *praṇava*, which comes very close to the circle which is *māyā*. It is by the removal of the illusion that Śiva leads the devotee through *praṇava* to the path of salvation. It is very well known that in the early inscriptions *praṇava* (*omkāra*) is always indicated by the spiral line: *omiti tava nirdeshṭrī māyāsmākam mṛḍopakartrī bho sāmāsādāśiva śambho śaṅkara śaraṇam me tava charaṇayugam* (*Suvarṇamālā stotra* 12).

Multi-armed

Śaṅkara having travelled all over the country, is not unaware of the multi-armed form of Śiva, specially in the case of Naṭarāja, and he has a beautiful eulogy for Śiva, as *sthāṇu*, a large stumpy trunk of a tree, that offers shade, as his innumerable hands form a cool forestglade: *chhāyā sthāṇor api tava tāpam namatām haratyaho śiva bho sāmā sadāśiva śambho śaṅkara śaraṇam me tava charaṇayugam* (*Suvarṇamālā stotra* 22).

Immaculate

A hymnal poet justifies the dance of Śiva to teach the ill-informed *ṛishis* in Dārūkāvana a lesson possibly. The *ṛishis*, as the story goes, were really in ignorance, but imagined themselves wise, and tried mistakenly to fight Śiva through their magical spells, but were silenced by the latter, who overcame all their magical devices, like the snake, tiger and elephant, the ill-omened Apasmāra dwarf, and started dancing to bewilder them. The mental agitation of the wives of the sages in Dārūkāvana, that called for Śiva's demonstration of his immaculate nature, like gold cast in fire, finally ending up in his evening dance, is not wicked, as the ignorant but self-conceited *ṛishis*, who swerved from the right path, and



cared naught for the world or its opinion, were to be set right: *dārūdyāne dvijavaravadhūpaplavo retasāgnau hemnas sandhyānaṭanam iti te cheshṭitam naiva duṣṭam mithyājñānopahatamanasām mārgam ullāṅghya dūram ye nishkrāntās triṇayana na tām lokavādās spṛśanti* (Halāyudha stotra 34).

Pūrṇa

The circle of flame around Śiva, which suggests his *pūrṇatā* or completeness, fully eradicates the concept of fragments, as component parts composing him. The poet first explains how, though the jewel on his head is half a moon, his weapon, a broken flint hand-axe, his begging bowl, a half of the skull of Brahmā himself, his own Gaṇas, dwarfish and ill-favoured, uncomely and half-baked, nevertheless, the Lord contemplated on is the assurer of completeness: *khaṇḍas chandras śirasi paraśuḥ khaṇḍam evāyudham te bhikṣhāpātram druhiṇaśīrasaḥ khaṇḍam ekam kapālam khaṇḍaprāyas tava parikaro yadyapittham tadāpi tvam sarveśhām smṛitīm upagatas sarvasampūrṇahetuḥ* (Halāyudha stotra 37).

This cannot but bring to one's mind the verse of another poet, Vākpati, who explains the crescent form of the moon, reduced to half its size, by the fact that he desires to adore whole-heartedly, meticulously imitating Śiva and Gaurī, who are themselves only halves coming together as Ardhanārīśvara: *dehaddha-ddha-pariṭṭhiya-gori-harārāhaṇekka-hiyayamva khaṇḍattaṇeṇa paṇamaha pariṭṭhiyam tiṇayana-miyanikam* (Gauḍavāho 39).

Philosophic Import

Daṇḍī, in describing the impossible, terrific dance of Śiva, narrates how, as he commences the *tāṇḍava*, he causes the earth on the hoods of snake Śeṣha to sink at the tread of his feet, clusters of clouds, along with hosts of planets to reel by the fast movement of his arms, the quarters, for a while, get scattered by the terrifying sound of 'aye', the world itself going into exceedingly divergent states: *pādanyāsānnamati vasudhā pannagaskandhalagnā bāhūkshepād graha-gaṇayutam ghūrṇate meghavṛindam utsādyante kṣhaṇam iva diśo humkṛitenātimātram bhinnāvastham bhavati bhuvanam tvayyupakrāntanṛitte* (Anāmaya-stotram 19). At the same time, he is not unaware of the fact that the Lord is not apart from the universe, as it comes into being only when he fills it up by his immanence, as the overlord of all. Without him as sentience, there is no cause or creator for creation; earth, water, sky, air and light owe their existence to their being parts of him: *viśvam prādurbhavati labhate tvām*

adhishṭhāpakam chennehotpattir yadi janayitā nāsti chaitanyayuktaḥ kṣhityādinām bhava nijakalāvattayā janmavattā siddhyatyevam sati bhagavatas sarvalokādhipatyam (Anāmaya-stotram 4).

How he creates is also described graphically by styling Śiva the architect, who lays the lines composing the ground plans for erecting the edifice of the universe. He is *bhuvanasthāpanasūtradhāra*. Prakṛiti is *bhogyā*, to be enjoyed, the Lord himself is *buddhivartī*, *bhoktā*. The *bhoga*, or enjoyment, is immense, by the coming together of *prakṛiti* and the *bhogī*, Śiva himself. Even the cause of the coming together is Śiva, as he does so as its *sūtradhāra* in order to create the universe: *bhogyām āhuḥ prakṛitīm ṛishayas chetanāsaktiśūnyam bhoktā chainām pariṇamayitum buddhivartī samarthaḥ bhogopyasmin bhavati mīthune pushkalas tatra hetur nīlagrīva tvam asi bhuvanasthāpanasūtradhārah* (Anāmaya-stotram 5).

The immense power of Śiva, whose dance shakes the world, is also suggested by vividly portraying the sudden transformation of the forceful stream of Gaṅgā into a small speck of a flower on his *jaṭās*—Gaṅgā, whose force pulled the planets, the sun and the moon, tearing asunder the quarters, putting to shame the pride of the waters of the deluge in their monstrous curving waves—making her lose her individuality the moment she touched the *jaṭās* of Śiva, where she immediately assumes the charming form of flowers for the matted hair: *vegākṛishṭagraharaviśāśivyasnuvānam digantān nyakkurvāṇam pralayapayasām ūrmibhaṅgāvalepam muktākāram hara tava jaṭābaddhasamspāśi sadyo jajñe chudākusumasubhagam vāri bhāgirathīyam* (Anāmaya-stotram 13).

But Śiva is not satisfied with having only the cool Ganges on his head. He has also the fierce fire, ambrosial moon and poison, all of which, accepted by him, suggest that his devotees are *dvandvasamas*, unaffected by the opposites, welcoming both together: *gaṅgāmbu śītam jvalanam cha ghoram sudhāmayam chandramasam visham cha samam dadhāsīti na chitram etat tvadarchakā dvandvasamā bhavanti* (Bhīmeśvara stotra 42).

Composite Iconographic Import

In *Isānastava*, the iconographic form of Gaṅgādharā and Natarāja are brought together. As Gaṅgādharā completely loses himself in his ecstasy of dance movements in *tāṇḍava*, his *jaṭās* get loosened and sway, when Gaṅgā luminously falls in hundreds of streams, creating the illusion of a moving

mountain of water, and makes the sages wonder at this picturesque manifestation of Śiva's glory: *yasminnuddhatatāṇḍavaikarasatāsātopanātyakrame visrastāsu jaṭāsu bhāsuratanur dhārāsataih pātukā gaṅgā jaṅgamavāriparvatadhiyam chitte vidhatte satām evam chitravibhūtir astu bhajatām bhavyāya gaṅgādharah* (Īśānastava 7).

Gaṅgādharā is also extolled by the poet as having his own mysterious ways of bestowing affection, without the world knowing his heart. The epithet of Śiva *vishamekshaṇa* is also thereby explained. The three-streamed Gaṅgā, swells in her waves, with the movements of Śiva in dance. He dances such a terrific *tāṇḍava*, with the *jaṭās* in a swirl, that the Ganges also goes into eddies, and Devī herself, in one half of his body engaged in the dance, surely cannot watch the movements of her co-wife Gaṅgā, however zealously she may be inclined to be alert. Gaṅgādharā, who is rightly styled by knowledgeable people as uneven-eyed, has concealed ways of affection, as though apparently more attached to poor, guileless Pārvatī, whom he tricks on the pretext of giving her half his body, he places on his head (*uttamāṅga*, lit. the best limb), the three-streamed Gaṅgā, always swelling in her waves: *mugdhām snigdha iva pratārya girijām ardhāṅgadānachchhalānnityodyadbahulabhramām tripathagām ātmottamāṅge vahan sthāne yo vishamekshaṇatvapadavīm āropyate kovidaiḥ prachchhannapraṇayakram'ostu bhajatām prītyai sa gaṅgādharah* (Īśānastava 5).

Almost an iconographic form of dancing Śiva, with all the weapons he carries in his hands, is given in *Śivastuti*. The fourteen worlds exhibited dismay as they shouted hail! hail! when Śiva sprang up in dance, his hands carrying the sharp axe, well-shaped trident, the sounding drum, the startled deer and *khaṭvāṅga*, completely unmindful of the whole range of mobile and immobile objects of the universe: *kathoritakuṭhārayā lalitaśūlayā bāhayā raṇaḍḍamarayā sphuraddharaṇayā sakhaṭvāṅgayā chalābhir achalābhir apyagaṇitābhir unnṛityatas chaturdaśa jaganti te jayajayetyayur vismayam* (Śivastuti 6).

In the *Kālabhairavāshṭaka*, there is similarly an iconographic picture of the deity in picturesque dance, dark in colour, and fearfully powerful, carrying the trident, chisel, noose and club: *śūlaṭaṅkapāśadaṇḍapāṇim ādikāraṇam śyāmakāyam ādidevam aksharam nirāmayam bhīma-vikramam prabhum vichitratāṇḍavapriyam kāśīkā-purādhināthakālabhairavam bhaje* (Kālabhairavāshṭaka 3).

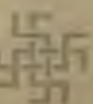
Vedic Hemistichs to Elucidate

In a *stotra* attributed to *Jaimini*, there is a happy blending of a Vedic hemistich in each of the verses composing it. This hymn is mainly in praise of Śiva as Naṭarāja in Chidambaram. In the introduction to the *stotra*, Bhagavān Jaimini is described as meeting Śiva dancing, with Apsaras in his *sabhā* in Puṇḍarikapuram (Chidambaram): *bhagavān jaiminir dhīmān puṇḍarikapure purā maharshisiddhagandharvayakshakin-narasevite nṛityadbhir apsarassamghair divyagānaiś cha śobhite nṛityantam param īśānam dadarśa sadasi prabhum nanāma dūrato dṛiṣṭvā daṇḍavat kshiti-maṇḍale papāvutthāya devatyam tāṇḍavāmṛitamāṅgalam pārśvasthitām mahādevīm paśyantīm tasya tāṇḍavam dṛiṣṭvā susamhrisṭamanāḥ papāta purato muniḥ...tatopi vedavedāntasārārtham tatprasādataḥ kṛitāñjalir uvāchedam vedāntastavam uttamam* (Vedapādastava 5-8, 11).

He describes how Śiva dances beautifully, balancing the lord of snakes and the lord of medicinal herbs (moon), battling on the *jaṭās*: *sarpādhirājaushadhināthayuddhakshubhyajjaṭāmāṇḍ-alagahvarāya tubhyam namas sundaratāṇḍavāya yasminnidam samchavichaiti sarvam* (Vedapādastava 95).

The eyes of Devī in mercy, like musical harmony to Śiva's dance, help us like a boat to cross all dangers: *girīndrajāchārumukhāvalokasugītayā chāru tayaiva dṛiṣṭyā vayam dayāpūritayaiva tūrṇam apo na nāvā duriṭā tarema* (Vedapādastava 103).

In the regular *stotra* itself, the Vedic *pādas* or hemistichs cleverly introduced towards the end of each *śloka*, have to be interpreted in terms of his dance. Śiva, the auspicious, the great Dancer, the Terrible One, accompanied by Devī, is the Lord of all, both good and bad. By the tread of his feet, he threatens the underworld, and by the touch of his crestlocks, he pierces the wall of heaven, his hands innumerable, threaten the quarters, but he is the Lord of all creatures on earth, his anklets jingle, he is attired in elephant's hide, with the Lord of snakes as his girdle string. He is the Lord who takes care of all the beings in his care. Suzerain of the five elements, the Master of the digits of the moon, the Lord of all souls and their refuge, he is the very Protector of the quarters. He is Maheśa the Creator of the universe, is the bowman Pināki, the sustainer, fire-eyed. He destroys the world, is multiformed, beautifully shaped in the contour of his arched brows and cheeks. He



has excellent form, pleasant and loving. Blissful and charming in his dance movements, the Lord of all the worlds is master of dance, striking wonder in the spectators. He wears half a braid, half devoid of garment, with a garland strung half-way with bones and lilies. He is masculine in one half of his body, which is both fair and dark in one. May we see him, the Darling of Umā, thus dancing in the dance hall for a hundred years, listen to his celestial music for a hundred years. With the trident in his hands, he dances at twilight, to the sound of the orchestra, the nectar of which fills the ears and enables him to drink music to his heart's content. The beautiful dancer is the abode of everything in this universe, which lives, moves and has its existence, all in him: *namas śivāya sāmbyā namas śarvāya śambhave namo naṭāya rudrāya sadasaspataye namaḥ pādabhinnaḥilokāya maulibhinnaṇḍabhittaye bhujabhrāntadigamtāya bhūtānām pataye namaḥ kvaṇan-nūpurayugmāya vilasatkṛittivāsase phaṇīndramekhalāyāstu paśūnām pataye namaḥ pañchabhūtādhipataye kalādhīpataye namaḥ nama ātmādhīpataye diśam cha pataye namaḥ. viśvakartre maheśāya viśvabhartre pinākinē viśvabhartre'gninetṛāya viśvarūpāya vai namaḥ sukaṇḍāya somāya sulalātāya subhruve sudehāya namas tubhyam sumṛidikāya mīdhushē vandeḥam devam ānandasandoham lāsyasundaram samastajagatām nātham sadasaspatim adbhutam ardhālakam avastrārdham asthyutpaladalasrajam ardhapūṇḍrakṣaṇam vande puruṣam kṛiṣṇapīṅgalam eṣha eva tu so'smākam nṛityantam tvavabhāsate lokayantam umākāntam paśyema śaradaśatam sabhāyām īśa te divyam nṛityavādyakalasvanam śravaṇābhyām mahōdeva śṛiṇavāma śaradaśatam (Vedapādastava 15-17, 22, 23, 27, 28, 32, 67, 72).*

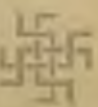
Sabhāpati

Appayya Dīkṣita, who spent the evening of his life in Chidambaram in order to enjoy the close presence (*darśana*) of the dancing Lord, has composed some touching verses on this favourite deity. He offers his salutation to the Lord of the Sabhā, the Lord of the dance hall, in his ether form, and in the company of his resplendent consort, Śivakāmasundarī, on the bank of the tank, Śivagaṅgā, and in the interior of the temple of Vyāghrapura, the tiger town, ever adored by Viṣṇu as Govinda, as he graciously dances, with his leg raised, to please Patañjali, so dear to him: *śrīmadvyāghrapurālayāntaragatasīśaivagaṅgātate bhāsvachchhri śivakāmasundariyutam devam nabhorūpiṇam vyatyastāṅghripatañjalipriyatamam nṛityantam atyādarāt govindābhīnutam bhajeḥam anīśam śambhum sabhānāyakam (Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendrāvijayaḥ, p. 143).*

He goes on to describe the characteristics of Śiva, who is a mine of all prosperity, whose cottage is the shade of the banian tree, whose intense desire is just the care of the world, who is, as it were, clad in the auspicious robes of the quarters, whose locks are the abode of the heavenly river, who is the inviting bank of the stream of peace, whose manifestation is nobility itself, who is a warrior unto Arjuna, who is suffused with white effulgence, who is the very pot of the honey of existence, who is the one great dancer in the ether of sentience, and who is the lover of Aparṇā, Pārvatī: *sampatter avaṭam kuṭīkṛitavaṭam viśvāvane lampaṭam dikkalyāṇapaṭam saritpadaśaṭam śāntisravantīṭaṭam dhīrātmaprakaṭam dhanañjayabhaṭam gauraprabhākaṇkaṭam chinmādhuryaghaṭam chidambaranāṭam paśyāmyaparnāviṭam (Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendrāvijayaḥ, p. 62).*

He was so absorbed in the thought of Naṭarāja that even when he was away from the dance hall of Chidambaram at his own place, he could not but think of the divine dancer, and a verse by him on this thought describes him as gliding on the stage of his own heart, where the Dancer performs his twilight dance, when, in the jewel on his lotus feet, the dark-hued Murārī is reflected and gives the impression of a sapphire set: *soyam madīyāśayaraṅgamadhye sāyamnaṭas tāṇḍavam ātanotu pādāravindābharāṇe yadiye dadhāti nilopalatām murārīḥ (Śrīmadappayyadīkṣitendrāvijayaḥ, p. 116).*

He was so moved by the sight of the *chandanābhisheka*, i.e., the bath of the image of Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundarī with liquid sandal paste, and his concern for Śiva, with all his affection pouring out for him, was so great, that this continuous pouring of water, cold in itself and sandal paste still more benumbing, chilling the warmth of the body, especially in mid-winter, almost frightened him into exclaiming: 'on your head, you have the cool stream of Gaṅgā and the chilly moon; on your hands and feet, there are slimy cold snakes, the left half of your body holds the daughter of the snowclad mountain, who is herself eternally moist with mercy, and on your entire body, lo! here is the cold sandal paste. Thus, oh! Lord of the golden hall! where have you the power to bear this excessive cold, if you cannot resort for eternal dwelling in my heart, which is ever ablaze with despair': *maulau gaṅgāśaśāṅkau karacharaṇatāle komaḷāṅgā bhujāṅgāḥ vāme bhāge dayārdṛā himagiritanayā chandanam sarvagātre ittham śītam prabhūtam tava kanakasabhānātha voḍhum kva śaktis chitte nirveda-*



tapte yadi bhavati na te nityavāso madīye (Śrīmadappayyadikshitendravidyāh, p. 116).

Ardhanārīśvara

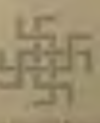
This allusion to the left half of Śiva as Devī in his dance form is probably nowhere better rendered in hymnal literature than by Śaṅkara himself who has composed the most picturesque union of the male and female part of Ardhanārīśvara, giving the verbal description of 'one half, golden-hued like the *Champā* flower, and the other white like camphor, braid on one side and heavy locks on the other, perfumed with musk and saffron on one and smeared over with ashes on the other, rejuvenating Cupid on one side and destroying the same on the other, bracelets and anklets tinkling on one side, with bright reptile anklets on one foot on the other, golden armlets on one side and the snake entwined on arm on another, with the eye like a large blue lotus on one side and the red lotus on the other, adorned with a garland of *Mandāra* flowers to the left, with a garland of skulls on the neck to the right, draped in magnificent attire on one side, uncovered on the other, with beautiful curly hair, dark like a water-laden cloud on the side and tawny locks of copper hue, bright like lightning on the other, exceeding the supreme on one side and lord of all on the other, playing the *lāsyā* as the prelude to the creation of the universe on one side, performing the *tāṇḍava* for its complete destruction and annihilation on the other, the mother of the worlds on one side and the father of the universe on the other, I bow to Śiva and Śivā': *chāṁpeyagaurārdhaśarīrakāyāi karpūragaurārdhaśarīrakāyā dhammillakāyāi cha jaṭadharāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā kastūrikākūṁkumacharchitāyāi chitārājapūñjavicharchitāyā kṛitasmarāyāi vikṛitasmarāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā viśālanīlotpalalochanāyāi vikāśipaṅkeruhalochanāyā samekshaṇāyāi vishamekshaṇāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā mandāramālākālītālākāyāi kapālamālāṅkitakandharāyā divyāmbarāyāi cha digambarāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā ambodharaśyāmalakuntalāyāi tadīlprabhātāmrajaṭā-dharāyā nīrīśvarāyāi nīkhīleśvarāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā prapañchasṛishtyunmukhalāsyakāyāi samastasamhāarakatāṇḍavāyā jagajjananyai jagadekapitre namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā pradīptaratnojjvalakuṇḍalāyāi sphuranmahāpannagabhūshaṇāyā śivānvitāyāi cha śivānvitāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā antar bahis chordhvam adhas cha madhye puras cha paśchāchcha vidikshu dikshu sarvam gatāyāi sakalam gatāyā namas śivāyāi cha namas śivāyā (Ardhanārīśvara stotra).*

Kalhaṇa has a beautiful *Ardhanārīśvara stotra*, which gives many of the charming attributes of the hermaphrodite form, that Śaṅkara has so beautifully described. In fact, the theme so profoundly appeals, that the poet has introduced his own fancy in describing the *āhārya* part of the dance. Kalhaṇa feels that decoration itself becomes confused in the Ardhanārīśvara form, as the left hand tries to black the right eye also with collyrium and the right hand tries to decorate the left with a snake armlet. Thus each half, still fully unacquainted with the other, looks confused and draws a significant smile on the face: *dātum vāñchhati dakṣiṇe'pi nayane vāmaḥ karaḥ kajjalam bhaujaṅgam cha bhujengadam ghaṭayitum vāme'pi vāmetaraḥ ittham svam svam aśikṣitam bhagavator ardhham vapuḥ paśyatos sādharasmitalāñchhitam diśatu vo vaktram manovāñchhitam (Ardhanārīśvara stotra 7).*

The moon also cooperates in making this Ardhanārīśvara fusion complete, with charming decoration. The moon halves himself following suit Śiva, who lovingly mingles half of his body with that of Devī, and on the crest of Śiva, gets enveloped by the nocturnal darkness of Devī's braid half, and thus completes the total merge of the halves: *premārdham vapuḥ vilokya militam devyā samam svāmīno maulau yasya nīśāpatir nagasutāvenīnīśām āśritaḥ āste svāmyanuvartanārtham iva tat kṛitvā vapuḥ khaṇḍitam deyād advayabhāvanām sa bhagavān devo'rdhanārīśvaraḥ (Ardhanārīśvara stotra 18).*

This naturally helps baby Skanda recall his father and mother by looking at the special characteristics to the right and left by remembering and recognizing them. The collyrium on the left eye, the blue tone on the neck to the right, the mirror in the left hand, the moon on the crest, determine for Skanda that this is mother and that father. But it takes time to recall the attributes and recognise them: *vāme sājjanam akṣhi dakṣiṇādiśi śyāmāyamaṇo galaḥ pāṇau tishṭhati darpaṇo'tra mukṣe'mutra sthitas chandramāḥ tan mātēyam ayam pīṭeti suchirāt sapratyabhijñam śanair yasyotsaṅgam agād guho bhavatu vaḥ prītyai sa gaurīśvaraḥ (Ardhanārīśvara stotra 2).*

Detailing how Śiva, as Ardhanārīśvara, is only one half in everything, the poet wonders and establishes that in his mercy, he is more than full. In the body of Śiva, which is halved, one half is occupied by the daughter of the mountain, on the crest it is the half moon, and, himself, he carries an axe composed of a broken shaft. Still, in the case of all those who seek pro-



tection of him, the mercy of the Lord is complete: *vapuhkhaṇḍe khaṇḍaḥ prativasati śailendra-duhituḥ śikhāṇḍe khaṇḍendus svayam api vibhuḥ khaṇḍaparaśuḥ tathāpi pratyagram śaraṇam upayātam prati vibhor akhaṇḍo vyāpāro jagati karuṇāyā vijayate* (Ardhanārīśvara stotra 17).

Stotras on Naṭarāja at Chidambaram

Of the numerous *stotras* that have sprung up around the Lord of Dance of Chidambaram, but which are of comparatively late date, there is one *Chidambaraṣṭava*, in which composite of three verses, two are very popular. One of these offers salutation to and describes the great Dancer, crescent moon-crested, wearing matted locks, Lord of Chidambaram, lit. the sky of sentience, as beautified by the anklet on his leg, with the white lotus eye of Viṣṇu placed respectfully on the sandal: *mañjirapādāya mahānāṭāya murārinetrārpitapādukāya chandrārdhachūḍāya jaṭādhārāya chidambareśāya namas śivāya*. The next verse, which is very piously repeated after *Śiva pūjā* (the worship of Śiva as a daily domestic ritual), describes the joyous experience of a devotee at the sight of Naṭarāja dancing. When the supreme Lord of Dance engages himself in *ānandatāṇḍava*, the melodious jingling of the gem-decked anklets on his lotus feet kindle joy, madden the mind, create stupefaction, horripilate and more than satisfy the eyes: *ānandanṛttasamaye naṭanāyakasya pādāravindamaninūpuraśiñjitāni ānandayanti madayanti vimohayanti romāñchayanti nayanāni kṛtārthayanti*.

In a *stotra*, known as the *Tatvāryāṣṭava*, on Naṭarāja at Chidambaram, there are many verses which are of an elucidatory nature. Just as a special tree, or a marked type of temple, is associated with a deity, with a distinctive name, a *tīrtha* or a reservoir of water, like the temple tank, has also its peculiar significance at a particular spot sanctified by the local deity. Ekāmreśvara at Kāñchī is associated with a single mango tree, and a grove of banyan trees explains the name Tiruvālaṅgādu, *Vaṭavana*. The Pāṭali tree is connected with Śiva at Pāṭalīkshetra. The deity associated with a *tīrtha* is illustrated in Śiva on the bank of the tank of the golden lotus at Madurai, *suvarṇapāḍmini*. At Chidambaram, the sacred tank is Śivagaṅgā. In this *stotra*, Naṭarāja's association with his consort, known as Śivakāmasundarī, and the tank Śivagaṅgā, is mentioned: *śivakāmasundarīśam śivagaṅgātīrakalpitaniveśam śivam āśraye dyukeśam śivam ichchhan mā vapuṣhyabhiniveśam*. Śiva's close identity with *ākāśa*, or the sky, in his eight-fold form, is recalled by referring to

him as *dyukeśa*, whose *jaṭās* are the sky. The *līṅga* at Chidambaram is specially associated with *ākāśa*; and that is why the last line of the verse clearly states that Śiva, or good and auspiciousness, can be achieved only by giving up all desires for the physical body and by contemplation on Śiva, who is of the nature of the sky, i.e. without form. Giving up attachment for the physical form is the only means of realising the formless.

In the next verse, Śiva's special association, through his drum, after the *Nādānta* dance at Chidambaram, with the exposition of the mastery of the structure of language to the great grammarian Pāṇini, is alluded to. As the Lord of all physicians, in fact, as the highest celestial physician, as the *Veda* has it—*bhishaktamam tvā bhishajām śruṇomi* and *prathamō daivyo bhishak*, Śiva is in this verse praised as the remover of all diseases. Vaidyanātha Śiva is a common concept all over the country and several temples dedicated to this form of Śiva are known. The best known and probably the most important, and forming, as it were, the central sacred spot in the Chola empire, is that of Vaidyanātha, in Madhyārjunakshetra in Tañjāvur district.

In this context, the oft-repeated magnificent description of the Chola Empire itself, as a temple by His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya of Kāñchī, should be remembered. Vaidyanātha at Madhyārjuna is the central deity as it were in this larger concept of several temples, scattered far and wide in an empire forming an integrated whole, as in any standard temple unit. Somāskanda Tyāgarāja at Tiruvārūr is Somāskanda, Naṭarāja at Chidambaram is Naṭarāja, Gaṇeśa at Tiruvālaṅjuḷi is Gaṇeśa and Skanda at Swāmimalai is Subrahmaṇya and Chaṇḍikeśvara, in a village in the neighbourhood of Tiruvīḍaimarudūr, is the Chaṇḍikeśvara of this larger geographical concept of a temple.

While the drum of Naṭarāja recalls Śiva's sounding it to manifest the fourteen principal grammatical epigrams to the grammarian Pāṇini, the snake on his hand proclaims him the lord of physicians, as a Vishavaidya, who can cure all ills.

The verse is, therefore, a reminder of Naṭarāja's exposition of *Vyākaraṇa* and *Āyurveda*, grammar and medicine: *gīrvanachakravartī gīśchetomārgadūratovartī bhaktīśayānuvartī bhavatu naṭeśo'khilāmayanivartī*.

In the next verse, there is special mention of the two sages associated with Chidambaram, Vyāghrapāda and Patañjali, and incidentally there is also a reference to the *Vedapādastava* at Chidambaram, as *vaiyāsikī gīḥ* is the song of Vyāsa i.e. the *Veda* and *Purāṇa*, and there is the *Vedapādastava* on Naṭarāja by Jaimini, the disciple of Vyāsa himself: *vaiyāghrapādabhāgyam vaiyāghram charma kamchana vasānam vaiyakaraṇa-phaṇḍyam vaiyāsikyā girā stutam prañumaḥ*.

In the verse following, the golden hall of Chidambaram, beautified over and over again by the Cholas and their successors, is specially mentioned, and Śiva's dress, composed of the quarters, is an attribute identifying him with the sky, as the sky-clad, and Chidambaram is the sacred spot for the element, sky. His special dance is one in which, as the Lord of the universe, he is the universal dancer and the witness of his own dance. There is special allusion to the illusion that he creates, which he removes before finally assuring emancipation: *hātakasabhā-nivāsaśāṭakatāpannasakalaharidantaḥ ghoṭakani-gamo māyānāṭakasākṣhī jagatpatir jayati*.

The devotee now lauds the first and foremost prince of actors on the stage, wearing the garland of *mālūra* flowers, and wonders how an atom like himself could understand his glory: *śailūsharājam ādyam mālūraprasavamālikābharaṇam pīlūpamo'ndhujīryachchhālūrābhah katham vijānīyam*.

Dwelling in the golden hall he is understood only through the most erudite accounts on him found in the *Purāṇas*. Who would not worship him, dazzling light that he is by himself, and in association with Durgā Nārāyaṇī? Here is an illusion to Kālī who challenged the Lord of dance, danced with him and finally accepted defeat: *kanakasabhaikaniketam kaṭhinapurāṇoktisā-rasaṅketam nārādhayanti ke tam nārāyaṇyā yutam svatuketam*.

The foremost of the hunters dances in the company of his beloved in the small, but thickly aromatic forest of Tillai trees, abundant in sprouts and flowers in full bloom, causing the waves of sentience to tremor and scintillate: *tillavane kshullavane pallavasambhinnaphullapunya-ghane chillaharim ullalayan vallabhayā bhīllatallajo naṭati*.

As he dances, he appears in the immaculate lotus of the heart, praised by the chanting of the purest Sāma hymns, rich in noble qualities, dispassionate, and shorn of all inimical thought:

vairājahṛitsaroje vairājādyais sa sāmabhis stavyaḥ vairāgyādiguṇādhyair vairādyutsṛijya dṛīsyate nṛi-tyan.

He dances, rendering devoted men blessed, expounding the nuances of grammar, through his great commentary, rendered articulate in the tinkling sound of his anklets and bracelets, the aphorisms themselves emanating from the sound of his drum: *dhakkāninādais sūtrānyaṅga-dānādir aho mahadbhāshyam vyākaraṇasya vivṛiṇvan nṛityati bhṛityān kṛitārthayan martyān*.

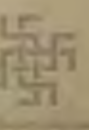
'O Foremost of dancers, dancer, Lord, which one of merit here would not desire to dwell in Tillavana, full of the delicacy of the soft creepers': *naṭanāyaka naṭa nāyaka iha sukṛitī no tava sprihayet mañjulatāmañjulatāmahite vastum cha tilla-vane*.

The Lord of the golden hall, whose joyous smile has all along been only to remove all heinous sins, is overwhelmed with joy, having found me heavy with countless sins, and so he dances excited: *atiduritottārakṛite chiradhṛita-harshas sabhāpatis sadyaḥ agaṇeyāghaghanam mām āsādyānandameduro naṭati*.

The Lord of Chitsabhā, with the resolve of delivering the entire world at his feet, admonishes everyone, by raising up his foot of deliverance, on the pretext of dance: *matpādalagna-janatām uddhartāsmṛitī chitsabhānāthaḥ tāṇḍava-mishoddhṛitaikasvāṅghris sarvān vibodhayati*.

'Let my mind seek shelter in the refuge at Chitsabhā, the protector of all the world in distress, the bearer of the skull, whose form is in part feminine, and who has settled the dispute between Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the Lord of Lakṣmī.' In this is the reference to Śiva as Mahādeva Liṅgodbhava, who set at rest the doubts of both Viṣṇu and Brahmā; his Ardhanārīśvara aspect is also mentioned: *āpannalokapālīni kapālīni strikṛitāṅgapālīni me samitavidhīśrīśaraṇe sarāṇe dhīr astu chitsabhā-saraṇe*.

Though Maheśvara, the Lord of Lords, Śiva is a *bhikṣhu*, a beggar, and as he has been described in the *Veda*, though pleasant and auspicious, he is terrible. Though he removes all bonds of births and deaths, he is himself the symbol of birth, and more wonderful, though himself the dancer, he is the lord of the stage: *bhikṣhur maheśvaropī śrutyā proktas śivoppyugraḥ api bhavahārī cha bhavo naṭopī chitram sabhānāthaḥ*.



'May the residue of the cool breezes of the Tilla forest, after being drunk deep by the snake jewels adorning Śiva, rendered cool by the spray drops from the dancing waves of the Ganges on the crest of dancing Naṭeśa, purify me': *nṛityannaṭeśamaulitvaṅgadgaṅgātaraṅgaśikari-
naḥ bhūṣhāhīpīṭaśiṣṭāḥ punantu mām tillavanavātāḥ.*

'When shall my ear experience the sound of the anklets tinkling sweetly, *jhall, jhall, jhall*, at the commencement of the dance by the Emperor of the golden hall': *kanakasabhāsamrājo naṭa-
nārambhe jhalam jhalam jhaliti mañjīramañjunināda
dhvaniyus śrotre kadā nu mama.*

'May the particles of ashes, scattered in the enthusiasm of dance, commingling with the saffron on the breast of the daughter of the Lord of mountains, fall on my limbs and render me pure': *parvatarājatanūjākuchataṭasamkrānta-
kumkumonmiśrāt naṭanārabhaṭīvidhutā bhūṭikaṇās te
spṛiṣeyur api me'ṅgam.*

'Will the spray drops of the stream on the crown of the first of the dancers, commingled with ambrosia dripping from the crest moon pressed by the skulls moving in dance, tumble and fall on my limbs': *naṭanochchalatkapālāmardī-
tachandraksharatsudhāmilitāḥ ādinaṭamaulitaṭinīpṛi-
shato gātre' tra me skhaleyuḥ kim.*

'When shall I see the Lord of the *sabhā* on whose crest is the Lord of ambrosia, who having conquered death, that delights in extinction, wears on his head skeletal remains': *paśyāmi
sabhādhiśam kadā nu tam mūrdhani sabhādhiśam
yaḥ kshayarasiṁkam kālam jītavān dhatte cha śirasi
kaṅkālam.*

The daughter of the mountain, giving away a half of her body, but without prejudice to her modesty, has appropriated to herself the lord of the *sabhā*, who is impossible to be obtained by those engrossed in their passion for wife and children: *tanujāyātanjāyāsaktānām durlabham
sabhānātham nagatanayā nagatanayā vaśayati dattvā
śarīrārdham.*

'O moon-crested Lord, that one among men who does not experience your dance of *ānanda-
tāṇḍava*, should never be considered by wise men as one among the *born*': *ānandatāṇḍavam
yas taveśa paśyen na chāpi nṛigaṇe yaḥ sa cha sa cha
na chandramaule vidvadbhir janmavatsu vigaṇeyaḥ.*

'Having made the woman ordained for me, someone else's, do please make me independent

of Cupid; and sending me forth to the golden hall, please refrain from giving me a golden hall': *kām aparavaśam kṛtvā kāmāparavaśam tva-
kṛtvā mām kanakasabhām gamayasi he kanaka-
sabhām hā na yāpayasi.*

'O my lewd mind, obtaining the sight of Śiva's dance, you always long for union with heavy-breasted damsels, and roaming about in the endless space of births and deaths, you do not delight in your contemplation of the glory of your Self': *naṭanam viḥaya sambhor
ghaṭanam pīnastanibhir āśāsse aṭanam bhava durante
viṭa nandasi na svabhūmasukham.*

'What shall I do to invite on me the joyous ambrosia-laden, merciful glances of the goddess Śivakāmeśī, free from all impurities, heavily laden with the bliss of the sentient' and helpful in reaching the farther shore of 'the ocean of births and deaths': *kalitabhavalanghanānām kim
karavai chitsukhaghanānām sumudām sāpaghanānām
śivakāmeśyāḥ kṛpāmṛitaghanānām.*

'I shall not completely drown myself in illusion, nor abandon myself in sorrow; but I shall completely identify myself with the farthest boundary of joy, at the last extremity of bliss, in the shining abode of Tillavana, which is my own immaculate self': *ninīlye
māyāyām na vīlye vā śuchā parām līye ānandasīmāni
lasattillavanīdhāmani svabhūmani tu.*

'Anon, in the golden hall, I attend with devotion on that God, of pleasant white hue of lotus stalk, famous as the repository of poison in his throat, but nevertheless the most pleasant and ever alert in protecting his devotees': *adhihemasabham prasabham bisabhaṅgavadānyadha-
nyarucham śrutagalagaralam saralam nīratam bhak-
tavane bhaje devam.*

'A fearful illusion came on me in the *Chit-
sabhā*, but the lunar crescent-adorned form of Śiva in the company of Umā, so pleasant to me, gave me the best of knowledge, through the light of the cool-rayed moon, who removes illusion and enlightens': *sabhayā chitsabhayā-
sīnmāyā māyāprabodhaśītarucheḥ suhītā dhīs suhītā
me somā somārdhadhārīṇī mūrtiḥ.*

'How many distressed individuals like me have not been liberated by the Lord of the golden hall, engrossed in dance, whose form is truth, bliss and existence': *patyā hemasabhāyās
satyānandaikachidvapushā katyārtā na trātā nṛityā-
yattena mādrīṣā martyāḥ.*



‘O Naṭeśa, for those who seek you with a desire for liberation, all the three *pumarthas* (objects desired by beings, i.e. *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*) are vouchsafed. For those who seek the mango tree for its fruit, the shade of the tree, the pleasant aroma and sweet taste, are all three also assured’: *bhajatām mumukshayā tvām naṭeśa labhyās trayah pumarthās cha phalalīp-sayāmrabhājam chhāyāsaurabhyamādhvya iva*.

‘O Naṭeśa, are you yourself dancing, or dancing me dressed in the five elements? You yourself dance happily without any covering. Enough of this illusion. I am also like you. I am of your nature. May I be with you?’ *kañ-chukapañchakanaddham naṭayasi mām kim naṭeśa naṭayasi naṭasi nirāvṛiti sukhito jahi māyām tvādrī-śoham api tat syām*. This has reference to the five *bhūtas* composing the body. Īśvara just makes the world dance according to His will, but the soul is of the nature of Paramātmā, and when it realises it, is one with him when the illusion is removed.

‘There shines a certain wonderful streak of knowledge on the banks of the tank Śivagaṅgā, that has a form alike in Brahmā the lord of all and in me the lowliest in intellect’: *vedhasi sarvādhīśe medhasi vā mādrīśe sarūpakṛitā rodhasi śivagaṅgāyā bodhasirā kāchid ullasati*.

‘I adore the beacon light of release from bondage, the destroyer of illusion, the Lord of the *sabhā*, simultaneously giving up my ego in this, my body full of filth’: *haṭṭāyitam vimukteḥ kuṭṭākam tam bhajāmi māyāyāḥ bhāṭṭarakam sabhā-yāḥ kiṭṭātmanyāṅake tyajan mamatām*.

‘Is there anywhere in any god the mark of the Supreme Being, of the nature of bliss, apart from the Lord of Chidambaram, the ether of sentience, who delights in *ānandatāṇḍava*?’ *śrīmachchidambareśād anyatrānandatāṇḍa-vāsaktāt brāhmam lakṣaṇam āste kutrachid ānandarūpatā deve*.

‘Serving you assures even liberation, let alone petty pleasures of life. Even to a celestial who has tasted ambrosia, you can help quench thirst’: *kshullakakāmakṛitepi tvatsevā syād vimuktim api dātṛi pītāmṛito pyudanyāśāntyai syāchchitsabhā-dhipāmartyaḥ*.

‘Verily, in truth I say, I have abandoned all other refuge, and am not to be thrown off from your feet. Please ever protect me, O Naṭeśa, your servant in great distress, and

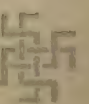
never abandon me’: *satyam satyam gatyantaram utsṛījya te padāpātyam atyantārtam bhṛityam na tyaja nityam naṭeśa mām pāhi*.

‘Pray to the Lord who dances *ānandatāṇḍava* in the company of Umā at Chidambaram, who is the very essence of the Absolute One, by reading through these 36 verses in *āryā* metre, pregnant with meaning, and steps, as it were, on a ladder to liberation’: *shaṭtrimśatā tatva-mayībhīr ābhīḥ sopānabhūtābhīr umāśahāyam āryā-bhīr ādyam paratattvabhūtam chidambarānandanaṭam bhajadhvam*.

In another *stotra*, styled *Naṭeśachintāmaṇi*, composed of eight verses, the five letters (*pañ-chākshara*), composing the *Śivamantra*, start each one of the verses. In one of these, *Chitsabhā*, or the hall at Chidambaram, is called the hall of knowledge, *Jñānasabhā*, and Śiva, the very embodiment of the five letters, *nama-sivāya*. It is well known that Sarasvatī sings to the accompaniment of musical instruments, when Śiva dances in the evening. The theme of her song is the glory of his vast, immaculate accomplishments. The Lord of Śrī adores him, who delights in *Śrīvidyā*, who showers fortunes on supplicants, as the Lord of Prosperity, and who dwells in Śrīchakra itself: *śrīmajjñānasabhāntare pravilasachchhṛīpañchavarṇākṛitīm śrī-vāṇīvinutāpadānanichayam śrīvallabhenārchitam śrī-vidyāmanumodinam śrītajanaśrīdāyakam śrīdharam śrīchakrāntaravāsinam śivam aham śrīmannāṭeśam bhaje*.

In the next verse, he is described as the Lord of the daughter of the mountain chief, un-obtained even by the lotus-born Brahmā, ever in search of him, and adored by Viṣṇu, with face charming, like the blooming lotus, the treasure-house of devotees, witness of the dance of the danseuses from the celestial city, at the same time, the most proficient in the various forms of the nuances of dance, himself the source of all music, being the musical notes personified: *navyāmbhojamukham namajjananīdhīm nārāyaṇenārchitam nākaukonagarīnaṭīlasitakam nā-gādinālamkṛitam nānārūpakanartanādichaturam nālī-kajānveshitam nādātmānam aham nagendratanayā-nātham naṭeśam bhaje*.

In another *stotra*, known as *Naṭeśaśṭakam*, composed of eight verses, as the name indicates, there are some which are interesting. The poet confesses that, as there are several forms of Śiva, like the seated Sukhāsana and others, mentioned in *Āgamas*, like *Vātula*, several



special deities, associated with millions of holy places, described under different names, like Viśveśa, treated exhaustively in *Purāṇas*, and he, a sinner can never distinguish them or judge their importance, his mind cannot flow out to any deity other than the Lord of the golden dance hall: *śrīmatśādākyamukhyāḥ paraśivatanavo vātulādyāgamoktā viśveśādyāḥ purāṇeshvapi cha nigaditāḥ koṭīśaḥ kshetrabhedāt kas tāsām tārāmyam kathayatu yad aghī vastubhedam mitho va devam nānyam tu cheto mama kanakasabhānāyakād abhyupaiti*.

In another verse, the poet requests the Lord to grant him liberation, but suddenly pauses and asks him to wait. He feels he had, in the usual way of the world, asked for liberation. Perhaps, this liberation is different from his eternal enjoyment of the *ānandatāṇḍava* dance of Śiva, in which case, he would prefer not to have this liberation at all: *muktim diśāsu yadi vā kṣaṇam āsya kiñchit vaktavyam asmyuditavān iha lokarūḍhyā ānandatāṇḍavasādānubhavād vibhinnā sā chennaṭeśa na kadāpi mama pradeyā*.

He goes into a philosophic analysis of sin and merit and pleads with the Lord. 'Merit and sin, as two categories, have long ago been characterised by you. Be not angry with me for having transgressed both. It is only your innate quality of mercy that has torn up this distinction between both, by protecting equally the virtuous and the sinful': *puṇyam pāpam iti vyavasthitir iyaṁ pūrvam tvayā yā kṛitā tām ullanghitavān asaviti mudhā krodham kṛithā mā mayi yāsau te karuṇeti kāpi sahaajā saiva vyavasthām imām bhanktvā puṇyakṛito'ghinas cha sutarām tulyam naṭeśāvati*.

The poet, in this context, draws a different line of argument, and places himself on a par with Śiva himself, who is the one at the height of merit, the other at the depth of sin. But still, he feels that as both lead and are thus equal, he cannot ask him for anything. 'You are, O Lord! of the nature of all that is the noblest and the best and I am similarly of the lowest and worst. The line of demarcation of all this is only between you and me. Thus, having obtained a kind of equality with you, I find I can ask nothing of you. Does it behove one equal to beg of the other? But yet, O Lord! being a fool, I know not what is good or bad: so of you, the conferrer of boons, I know not what to ask: you know best what is good for me: you are easily pleased even by a single salutation, being the most merciful. Whatever

is for my good, please do that': *utkarshānām tvam asi sakalasyāpakarshasya chāham sīmā loko bhavati nikhilastvāvayor antarāle evam tauḷyam bhajata iha me nāsti kiñchit tvadarthyam yāñchā pumsām sadṛśi nitarām yujyate śrīnaṭeśa/na hi hitam ahitam vā nātha jñāmi mūḍhas tad iha vārada yāche tvām sabhānātha kim vā sakṛid avanatimātrāt suprasanno dayālo mama bhavati hitam yat tad vidhehi tvam eva*.

The *stotra* finally concludes with a prayer that we may be the devoted followers of the Lord, who is the mountain, holding the celestial river, flowing amidst the *jaṭās*, who stopped the antics of the flower-arrowed Cupid, whose garments are the quarters, whose dwelling mansion is the ether of sentience (*Chidambara*): *jaṭālulṭhatsvarṇadaśambarasya parastapushpāyudhadambarasya bhavāma dāsā haridambarasya grihibhavaddivyachidambarasya*.

In another *stotra*, also styled *Nateśāṣṭaka*, and composed of eight verses, there is a vivid picture of Śiva's dance, *ānandatāṇḍava*. 'I seek the protection of the Lord of the *Chitsabhā*, who calls up the entire concourse of living beings in the three worlds, by the tinkling sound of the anklets on his left lotus foot, slightly raised, who is praised by the lotus-eyed Vishṇu and others, and who accomplishes the five essential acts, *pañchakṛitya*, creation, protection, destruction, withdrawal of illusion and the blessing of liberation': *kiñchitkuñchitavāmapadavilasanmañjīrāśiñjāravaiḥ puñjibhūtajagatrayam suraganaiḥ kañjākṣhapūrvair nutam pañchānām sthitisṛishṭisamhṛititirodhānaprasādātmanām kartāram śaraṇam bhajāmi satatam śrīchitsabhānāyakam*.

'I seek the protection of the Lord of *Chitsabhā*, who dances, with all the three worlds filled with the sound of the beat of drums and blowing of conches, firmly placing his foot on the great demon *Apasmāra*, converting him almost into a foot stool, attended on the left by the daughter of the *Himālaya* and the tiger-footed *Vyāghrapāda*, who sings his glory': *uchchair maddalatālaśaṅkhaninādair āpūrya lokatrayam pīṭhikṛitya mahāsuram tadupari sthitvā sahāsam dṛiḍham vāmāṅgasthitayā cha śailasutayā vyāghrāṅghriṇā samstutam nṛityantam śaraṇam bhajāmi satatam śrīchitsabhānāyakam*.

While the next two verses describe the various adornments of *Nateśa*, like the skull, the celestial Ganges, the crescent moon, all on his crest, the drum, the deer, the snake, the



FIG. 5. The evening dance of Śiva surrounded by celestials with Devī enthroned as the witness of his dance, Kāngrā school, 18th century A.D., from Tagore collection.

flame, as attributes in his hands, the tiger hide as his garment, the lord of snakes as his sacred thread, and so forth, the seventh verse describes the great day of his dance. At noon, on Thursday, marked by the constellation of Pushya, when the sun is in Makara, the Lord of the stage emerges in the large hall of Chidambarasabhā, along with the notes of innumerable musical instruments, like the drum, resounding dham, dham: *pushye rikshapare bṛihaspati-yute bhānau cha nakram gate madhyāhne śubhade chidambarasabhāmadhye mahāmaṇḍape dhām dhām ityanunādite cha paṭahādyānūnavādyāravair āvirbhūtam ajam bhajāmi satatam śrīchitsabhānāyakam.*

‘I seek shelter in the Lord of the *sabhā*, who dances to the note of the *muraja*, that keeps time resounding, *Om, Om*, and the twang of

the lute, that pours forth the musical melody of *sa ri ga ma pa da ni*, accompanied, in the act, by his consort, and praised by hosts of sages’: *om omīyanunādite cha muraje tāle svanam kurvati viṇāyāḥ kvaṇite sarigamapadānīyeli gīte mudā śrīsāmbhe naṭane mahāmuniḡaṇālāṅkāra samstūyase nṛityantam śaraṇam bhajāmi satatam śrīchitsabhānāyakam.*

In another stotra, *Pañchāksharāshṭaka*, the last verse is an interesting one which closely resembles a verse from *Hālāsya Purāṇa*, in praise of the dancing of Śiva of the silver hall at Madurai. ‘Salutation to Śiva, the Lord of the golden hall, who is in the company of the daughter of the Lord of mountains, the glory of whose excited dance is praised by bowing celestials, like the lotus-born Brahmā, Mukunda and Indra, the lord of the *devas*’:

kamalabhavamukundanirjarendrastutanatasambhramanṛittavibhramāya achalapatisutāsahāya tubhyam kanakasabhāpataye namas śivāya.

Bhaktaśaraṇastotra, a small one composed of six verses, has special reference to the festival on the day of the constellation of Ārdra at Chidambaram, specially connected with Natarāja. The significance of the constellation of Ārdra itself is naively, yet convincingly, explained by the poet as suggestive of the soft heart of Śiva, who is moist with mercy. The hymn is interesting. 'O Śrīkaṇṭha! undoubtedly it is because you are lovingly wet in your heart towards your hosts of devotees that you are fond of the festival of Ārdra (lit. wet). On this occasion, you reassure, as it were, the witnesses of this festival, by your lateral movements in dance, not to be daunted by their sins, or even by death itself. As if to recall that Śambhu mercifully makes supplicants luscious, summer moistens every one in the world. O Lord of Pārvatī! the *Purāṇa* mentions the constellation of Ārdra as the most appropriate for your festival, as if to proclaim this trait to the world, that the lotus-like heart of Naṭeśa is moist with affection and mercy. O! Lord of the *sabhā*, ocean of mercy! just as you quickly

destroy darkness to protect the world, so should you speedily remove my ignorance and vouchsafe for me true knowledge': *ādrantahkaraṇas tvam yasmādiśāna bhaktavṛndeshu ādrotsavapriyo'tas śrīkaṇṭhātrāsti naiva sandehaḥ drashtṛinstavotsavasya hi lokān pāpāt tathā mṛityoḥ mā bhīr astviti śambho madhye tiryaggatāgatāir brūshe prakaroti karuṇayārdrān śambhur namrān iti prabodhāya ghar-moyam kila lokān ādrān kurute'dya gaurīśa ādrā naṭeśasya manobjavṛittir ityarthasambodhakṛite janā-nām ādrārkhsha evotsavam āha sastam purāṇajālam tava pārvaṭīśa yathāndhakam tvam vinihatya śighram lokasya rakshām akaroḥ kṛipābdhe tathājñātām me vinivārya śighram vidyām prayachchhāsu sabhādhinātha (Bhaktaśaraṇa stotra 1-4, 6).*

Devī Witness of Śiva's Dance

There is no better description of the entire gamut of orchestra for Śiva's glorious dance in the evening, to witness which Devī herself is enthroned, amidst a distinguished audience, than in the *Pradoshastava* (Fig. 5). Seating Gaurī, the mother of the three worlds, on a gem-decked golden throne, on the rocky surface of Kailāsa, the trident-bearer, Śiva, portrays his dance at eventide, when all the celestials surround him. Sarasvatī holds the lute, Indra the flute, the lotus-born Brahmā



FIG. 6. Rock-cut sculpture illustrating Śiva dancing, witnessed by Devī standing beside the bull, other celestials like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra in the background, Ganas watching with attention and helping the musical orchestra, Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Tirupparamkūram.

has his hands engaged in rhythmic beat, the goddess Śrī pours forth music, Viṣṇu dexterously beats the noble drum, as all the celestials stand around respectfully, at sunset, in attendance on the Consort of Mṛḍānī. Gandharvas, Yakshas, Garuḍas, Nāgas, Siddhas, Sādhyas, Vidyādharas, Devas, the best of Apsaras, in groups, and all the denizens of the three worlds, in the company of the Bhūtas, attend on Śiva at the approach of eventide. Hence, at sunset, Śiva alone is to be worshipped, not others like Hari, the lotus-born Brahmā and others. When Śiva is worshipped according to rites, all the other lords of the celestials are pleased: *kailāśasailabhuvane trijagaj-janitrīm gaurīm niveśya kanakāchitaratnapīṭhe nṛityam vidhātum abhivāṇchhati śūlapānau devāḥ pradoshasamaye nu bhajanti sarve/vāgdevī dhṛitavallakī śatamakho veṇum dadhat padmajas tālonmudrakaro ramā bhagavatī gānaprayogānvitā viṣṇus sāndramṛidaṅgavādanapaṭur devās samantāt sthitās sevante tam anu pradoshasamaye devam mṛḍānīpatim/gandharvayakshapatagoragasiddhasādhyavidyādhara-mavarāpsarasām gaṇās cha yenyā trilokanilayās saha-bhūtavargāḥ prāpte pradoshasamaye nu bhajanti sarve/ataḥ pradoshē śiva eka eva pūjyo'tha nānye haripadmajādyāḥ tasmin maheśe vidhinejyamāne sarve prasīdanti surādhināthāḥ (Pradoshastotra 4-7).*

In the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, there are very important strings of names of Devī. Of these in the *Sahasranāmastotra*, *Ashtottara* as well as *Trīsatī*, the special aptitude of Devī for dance, either as a dancer herself or as a witness of dance, is given (Fig. 6). She is generally conceived as the Supreme Goddess, seated on a throne and witnessing all, as the celestials gather around her and salute her. She is, in such a case, more than a witness of the dance. She is in the *Sahasranāma* called *Maheśvaramahākālpamahā-tāṇḍavasākshiṇī*. She witnesses the great and terrific *tāṇḍava* dance of Maheśvara at the end of the *mahākālpa*; and she is the only witness. She is also called *Pañchakṛityaparāyaṇā*. The dance of Śiva is mainly for the *pañchakṛitya*, and without the *śakti* infused by Devī herself, as explained by Śankara, Śiva cannot move even an inch. She is also thus vitally associated with *pañchakṛitya*.

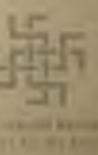
She is also a dancer in her own right, and that is why she is styled *Naṭeśvarī*, as she dances by herself. Her special predilection is for *lāsya*, and not for *tāṇḍava*. That is why she is called *Lāsyapriyā*, fond of *lāsya*, the more delicate form of dance. In the *Ashtottaranāma* of Devī, she is styled the dancing partner of *Maheśa*,

as she dances with him and vies with him in her knowledge and exposition of the art, *Maheśayuktanaṭanatatparā*. In the *Trīsatī*, or three hundred names of Devī, some are revealing, in regard to her knowledge and appreciation of the art of dance. She is the witness of the *tāṇḍava* of Śiva, *Isatāṇḍavasākshiṇī*. As a witness of dance, she is described as watching the *hallisa* dance in circles. *Hallisalāsya* is a favourite popular folk dance, like the *rāsakṛīḍā*. One of the finest examples of this occurs among the paintings from Bagh. She is pleased witnessing *hallisalāsya*—*Hallisalāsyasantushṭā*. At the same time, she is fond of the best of classical dance, in its delicate phase *lāsya*, *Lāsyadarśanasantushṭā*. She is also a great dancer herself, and she dances in the great hall, resounding with *hṛīmkāra*, her favourite monosyllabic sound, *Hṛīmkārāsthānanartakī*.

In this context should be understood Devī as a witness of Śiva's dance after the deluge. In Śankara's *Kalyāṇavṛiṣṭistava*, it is the one form of Devī 'carrying the noose, goad, sugarcane bow and flower arrows, that is a witness of the fearful form of Śiva, carrying the broken axe, as he dances at the end of the *kalpa*': *kalpopasamhṛītiṣhu kalpitatāṇḍavasya devasya khaṇḍaparaśoḥ parabhairavasya pāśāṅkuśaikshavaśarāsanapushpabāṇā sā sākshiṇī vijayate tava mūrtir ekā (Kalyāṇavṛiṣṭistava 13)*.

The *Pañchastavī*, five exquisite *stotras* on Devī, by an unknown author, who probably lived long before Bhoja, who quotes from one of them, gives the essence of the Devī cult. One of the verses here has a significant interpretation of Devī witnessing Śiva's dance to transmute it into gold. The wild *tāṇḍava* of *Khaṇḍaparaśu* Śiva, carrying a primitive axe, with broken blade, in his sport of devastating the world at the end of every *kalpa*, immediately gets transformed and softened into *lāsya*, for the good and prosperity of the universe, all because it is witnessed by Devī, with her benign glances: *kalpopasamharanakeliṣhu paṇḍitāni chaṇḍāni khaṇḍaparaśor api tāṇḍavāni alokanena tava komalitāni mātār lāsyātmanā pariṇamanti jagadvibhūtyai (Pañchastavī 4, Ambāstuti 10)*.

This transformation of *tāṇḍava* into *lāsya* is possible in Śiva, who is a master of both, with a special preference for *tāṇḍava*, while Devī prefers the softer *lāsya*. In fact, Śiva's wild dance is not only *tāṇḍava*, but a dance on the crematorium, with the ashes of corpses smeared on his body as an unguent, clad as he is, in an ele-



phant hide and surrounded by hosts of goblins, carrying a skull cap as a beggar's bowl, making *tāṇḍava* itself worse by its fantastic look. But the presence of Devī as the witness of his dance, not only softens the atmosphere, but even beautifies it: *charmāmbaram cha śavabhasmavilepanam cha bhikshāṇam cha naṭanam cha paretabhūmau vetālasamhatiparigrahatā cha śambhos śobhām bibharti giriḇe tava sāhacharyāt* (*Pañchastavi* 4, *Ambāstuti* 9).

The line of Śaṅkara, *kṛitasmārāyai vikṛitasmārāya*, is also echoed in *Pañchastavi*, but the idea is carried one step further. Where the destroyer, Śiva, destroyed by his eye a single Kāma, Devī, the merciful, recreated him manifold, by her *kaṭāksha* glances, and from that day the poet fancies that Śiva, ashamed, holds his forehead eye shut: *daghdham yadā madanam ekam anekadhā te mugdhaḥ kaṭākshavidhir aṅkurayāṁchakāra dhatte tadāprabhṛiti devī lalāṇanetram satyam hṛiyeva mukulīkṛitam indumauliḥ* (*Pañchastavi* 4, *Ambāstuti* 7).

In another verse of his, Śaṅkara describes the glorious dance of Śiva in front of Devī, enthroned. This is very much in the spirit of the description in *Pradoshastava*, where there is a similar description of Devī enthroned. The gems of the Lord of the snakes, scattered on the floor of splendour of Devī, as Śiva dances in front of her, almost create a reflection in wonder whether they are of the ocean or of the Rohaṇa hill: *bhaktyā kim nu samarpitāni bahudhā ratnāni pāthodhinā kim vā rohaṇaparvatena sadanam yair viśvakārmākaroṭ ā jñātam giriḇe kaṭākshakalayā nūnam tvayā toshite śambhau nṛityati nāgarājaphaṇinā kīrṇā maṇisreṇayaḥ* (*Triṇpurāsundarīmānasa pūjāstotra*).

Appayya Dikshita, in describing Devī as the essence of *Brahmavidyā*, as the means of liberation from birth cycles, and as the finale of Hari, Brahmā and the entire concourse of mobile and immobile objects of the universe, especially marks her glory as the witness of the fearful dance of Śiva at the time of the deluge: *tvam sākshīṇī pralayabhairavatāṇḍavānām tvam śoṣhīṇī saharidhātṛicharācharāṇām tvam mochinī sakala-samsṛitijālīkānām tvām brahmasamvidam apītakuche namāmi* (*Apītakuchāmbāstava* 8).

Like the *Gītāgovinda*, there is a 19th century work of Sadāśiva Dikshita, called *Gītasundara*, in which the dance of Śiva as Somasundara in Madurai, is described. In *ashtapadi* I, the sixth line refers to the dance, manipulating with

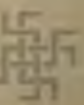
delicacy the principles of Bharata. Śaṅkara dances, filling his movements with the nine flavours, to please Patañjali. 'O Somasundara ! eternally joyous ! be victorious, O Lord of Madurai': *niyata-patañjalaye latitādṛitabharatam nṛityasi śaṅkara navarasabharitam somasundara nityānanda jaya madhurādhipate* (*Gītasundara*).

At the end of the *ashtapadi*, he again mentions that Śiva dances mainly for Patañjali, *sānandam naṭate patañjalikṛite*.

A whole *ashtapadi* on the charm of Śiva's dance in Madurai is conceived by Taḍātakā, more as manifesting the nuances of *śṛīṅgāra*. The *dhruva* line here, or the burden of the song, is Taḍātakā's remark, that in her proximity, there is the auspicious form of Śiva, holding the bow of Cupid, as it were, to experience the joy of her beauty: *mām anubhavitum dhṛitasumachāpam vasativāgre śivaśubharūpam*. There is Śiva, with ambrosia sprinkled on him, from the bud-shaped, shimmering, lunar crest, with the lazy-moving amorous look, indicating the depth of his wisdom in love, with the perfume of the betel indicated by the quivering lips as Śiva smiles, with a garland of bright *kuravaka* and *keśara* flowers, toned by the green pollen with three golden streaks, decorating in *tilaka* fashion the jewelled ornaments, with the red sandal paste on his body, imprinted with the *makara* designs in musk, from the large breasts of Pārvatī, with the jewelled deer dancing on the tip of the fingers, soft and red like coral, with the tips of his glances perfumed by the blue lily, placed on the ear as adornment, with steadfast reassurance, engaged by the fire, held in his hand, with the mood of the flavour of love, established by the sound of the resounding drum, with the leg, slightly raised, illumined by the jewelled anklet, sweetly resounding with the destruction of *andhaka* (darkness), by the rhythmic beat of *jhala jhala* expatiating the footfalls, with the effulgence of the gems on the hoods, scattered from the curled ear ornaments, mildly swayed, with the charm of the scream of love, expounded by the repetition of Bharata's text on dance, with alluring dance dress of the learned one, in the hypocritical battle with the flowery-arrowed Cupid, with his abode in Hālāsya (Madurai), cool with the spray of the waters of the river Vegavati: *taralitamaulikalādharakarakalitasudhārasasekam madanamadālasalochanasūchitaratikauśalapariṇākam harahasitasphuritā-dharadarśitaviṣṇusaurabhasāram pītaparāgavidhūsarakesarabhāsurakuravakahāram kāñchanarekhātraya-pariśobhitatilakitaratnakalāpam gurukuchamṛigamada-*

maḥarīmudritakuṅkumasāravilepam vidrumakomala-
raktāṅgulimukhanartitaratnakuraṅgam karṇottam-
sītakuvalayavāsitalilāpāṅgatarāṅgam karadhṛitapāva-
kakalitaparatyayanīyatāchañchalabhāvam pratikala-
damarukavādanasūchitakāmakalārasabhāvam mañju-
lasiñjītamāñjīrojjvalakiñchidudañchitapādam pada-

gativistṛitatālahalajjahalavihitāndhakatanubāddham
mandāndolitakuṇḍalavilasitavitataphaṇāmaṇibhāsam
āmreditabharaṭāgamaphaṇītiprakāṭitamāṇitavilāsam
kusumaśarāhavakuhanāpaṇḍitatāṇḍavamohanavesham
vegavatījalasīkaraśīṭalanavahālāsyāniveśam (Gītasun-
dara 5)



NATARAJA IN EPIGRAPHICAL LITERATURE

Dedications of and to Naṭarāja in Inscriptions

Naṭarāja figures prominently in several inscriptions from all over India, and even from abroad, from thousands of miles away in South East Asia. It is not only the poetic enthusiasm, the fervour of a devotee, or the joy of a creative genius, imagining different attitudes of Śiva or Devī in dance, but several facts pertaining to the installation and dedication of images of the dancing Lord, or a deep impression created by the sight of a famous image in a sacred shrine, known by a reputation, that provided a special place of honour in the mind devoted to the deity, eagerly looking forward to gazing at it. The inscriptions also provide facts pertaining to details of provision made for decorating the images for processions and festivals. The indelible impression that the dancing form of Śiva has made in *Śaivāchāra* and *dharma* is apparent from the numerous references to this aspect of Śiva, not only where definitely something about the installed image had to be mentioned, but also in the general choice of the dancing deity in the invocatory verses of innumerable inscriptions of different dynasties.

In the long inscriptions incised on the outer walls of the Rājaraṣeśvara temple at Tañjāvūr, there is a whole series of metal images, specially prepared and presented to the institution by the emperor, his queens, his elder sister, Kundavai and his ministers. We gather from the inscriptions not only the facts about the presentation of images, like Naṭarāja, to be taken in procession, as *utsavavighraha*, but also about the usual mode of weighing jewels by a stone named after the deity, who is called both Dakṣiṇameruvitaṅkan and Āḍavallān. The gold of these jewels was weighed with a stone called after the Lord of dance, Āḍavallān. The name Āḍavallān, chosen for even the god established in the capital at Tañjāvūr, shows the great affection and reverence for the Dancing Lord of Chidambaram, who was always considered by the Chōlas as their family deity.

An inscription of this series mentions the gift by Solamahādevī, one of the consorts of the emperor Rājaraṣa, in the twenty-ninth year of his

reign, giving a description of this image, as a solid one of Āḍavallār, having four arms, the goddess Gaṅgā Bhaṭṭārakī on the braided hair, nine braids of hair (*jaṭās*), and seven flower garlands (*pūmālai*), on Musalagan. The image is set on a large lotus, which again has a pedestal and a solid aureole. Similarly, the queen gave a solid image of his consort Umāparamēśvarī, standing on a lotus, set on a pedestal, with an aureole. Details of dimensions are stated individually for all these parts, and for the images themselves, from the feet to the tip of the hair: *svasti śrīḥ: udaiyār śrīrājarājadevar nambirāṭṭiyār solamahādeviyār śrīrājarāṣeśvaramudaiyār koyilil yāṇḍu irupattonpatāvadu varai eḷundaruḷivitta chepputtirumenikal udaiyār koyilil muḷattāl alandum ratnamgal charaḍuñchattamuñcheppāṇikalunikki dakṣiṇameruvitaṅkan ennunkallāl nirai eḍuttuṅkallil veṭṭinapaḍi—kkilkkidaṇḍa muṣalaganoḍuṅkūda pādādikeśāntam mukkāḷearaikkāl mulaucharamum śrīhas-tam nālum jaṭai mel gaṅgābhaṭṭārakiyum jaṭai on-padum pūmālai eḷum udaiya ganamāka eḷundaruḷivitta āḍavallār tirumeni onru ratnanyāsam cheydu ivar eḷundaruḷi ninra mūviral ucharam udaiya padmam onru aiviral ucharattu arai muḷa nīlattu patirru viral akal-am udaiya pīṭham onru mummūḷame iruvirarchurrilkanamākachcheyta prabhai onru ivar nampirāṭṭiyār pādādikeśāntam padineḷuvirale iraṇḍu torai ucharam udaiya ganamāka eḷundaruḷivitta umāparamēśvari-yār tirumeni onru ratnanyāsam cheydu ivar eḷundaruḷi ninra iruvirale iraṇḍu torai ucharam udaiya pīṭham onru/irumuḷame patin nālviralalai chutrrudaiya ganamākachcheyda prabhai onru/ (S. Ind. Inscr. 2, 2, p. 170).*

In a 13th century inscription of Kāḍavarāya from Tiruvannamalai, there is a reference to an ornament, aptly named to indicate proficiency in dance, *bharatavalla perumāl*, after the name of the chieftain, offered to the Dance Lord by Kopperuṅjīṅga of Kūḍal. This inscription, on the west wall of Aruṇāchaleśvara temple, describes an ornament called *bharatavalla*, finely set with high quality rubies, to the god dancing, with anklet rings, to the accompaniment of the tune sung by Umā, whose eyes, with spreading lines, are smeared with collyrium: *ōḍari-maik-kaṇ-umaiy-iśai-pāḍi āḍiyavadiruṅ-kaḷar-perumālukk-ina-māṇikkam-ilāṅgachcheyda baratavalla perumāl-ennun-tiruvāśigaiyuṅ chiranda (Epigraph. Ind. 27, p. 99).*

Another epigraph mentions how Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, the great conqueror, was thrilled as he entered the sacred limits of the holy Puliyūr (Chidambaram), where, as the inscription says, 'live Brāhmaṇas studying the rare *Vedas* without the least doubt'. Māravarman 'saw the sacred form of Naṭarāja united with his consort, charmingly dancing in the golden hall; and his mind being filled with ecstasy, he prostrated himself at the flowery feet of the god, which could not be known by Brahmā, who resides on the beautiful lotus flower, and by Viṣṇu, who wears a cool garland of *tulāy*': *ayyappaḍāda arumarai-ter-andaṇar vāḷ devya-ppuliyūr-tiruvellaiyuṭ-pukku-pponnambalam poliya āḍuvār pūvaiyuḍan mannun-tiru-meni kaṇḍu manai-kalippa-kkola-malar-mel-ayanun-kūḷi-tulāy-mālum ariyā malar-chēviḍi vaṇaṅga* (Epigraph. Ind. 22, p. 47).

From an inscription we learn how Parāntaka covered the Chidambaram temple with gold, which he won by his own valour. The larger Leyden plates of Rājārāja I graphically describe that this ornament of the solar race gave a covering of gold to the mansion of the moon-crested god, gold brought home by him from different regions where he was triumphant: *svabāhuvīryāvajitākhiḷāśāmukhopanītāmalahāṭakena samāvṛiṇon mandiram indumauler vyāghrāgharāre ravivamśaketuḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 22, p. 239).

In the Tiruvālangāḍu plates, this is again repeated, as it mentions Parāntaka's building for Purāri (Śiva), who formerly dwelt on the silver mountain Kailāsa, a golden mansion, called *Dabhrasabhā*, with his vast resources, putting to shame the lord of wealth, a friend of Śiva: *rajatagirijushaḥ purā purārer akṛita sa dabhrasabhābhidhānam ekaḥ kṇakamayam udārasampadā yas sachivam amushya cha lajjitam dhaneśam* (South Ind. Inscr. 3, 3, p. 396).

Though we find innumerable sculptures and images in metal of Naṭarāja, it is not in every case that there is an inscription mentioning how and why it was carved, and by whom. But there are, nevertheless, inscriptions that allude to the preparation of such images. It has been already noted that innumerable images in metal were presented by Rājārāja, members of his family and his ministers, to the great temple at Tañjāvūr, and a pointed reference to the details of their form, including that of Naṭarāja, are known from the inscriptions.

Synonyms of Naṭarāja

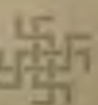
Similarly, there is an inscription from Norod, in the vicinity of Gwalior, which mentions the preparation of images to be set up in the temple. The figures of Umāmaheśvara, Devī and Gaṇapati are in addition to a special form of Śiva for the temple, Nāṭyeśvara, caused to be made by the great Śaiva teacher Vyomaśiva: *śivayugmam umādevīnāṭyeśvaravināyakau samāṭham mandirai ramyair ayam etānyachikarat* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 359).

It is clear from this that Naṭarāja was known in Central and North India by the name Nāṭyeśvara. Such variations of the names of Naṭarāja are known only from inscriptions, in the absence of regular *Śilpa* texts that usually give the nomenclature. In South India, also, in addition to the name Naṭarāja or Naṭeśa, found in *Śilpa* texts, there are the terms Naṭṭiśvarattālvār and Kūttapperumānaḍigal, as synonyms for Naṭeśa, occurring in inscriptions.

In a Śiva temple, at Ādanur in Tirunelveli district, is an inscription mentioning a perpetual lamp, donated to Naṭṭiśvarattālvār: *śūraṅgudi nāṭṭu ātanūrāna uḍayamārtāṇḍanallūr nāṭṭiśvarattālvārukkku tirunundāvilakku*. . . (South Ind. Inscr. 14, p. 73). The term Kūttapperumānaḍigal for Naṭarāja occurs in an inscription recording the offering of gold, for maintaining a perpetual lamp in the Śiva temple at Kayar in Chingleput district: *āḍerippidārar koil ninraruḷiya kūttapperumānaḍigalukku tiruvamirtukku pakalum irāvum eriya naṇḍāvilakkukku ivan pon koḍuttu*. . . (South Ind. Inscr. 13, p. 160).

We have already noted that in East Bengal, it is again in an inscription, that the name Narteśvara occurs. The inscription mentions the consecration of a dancing form of Śiva, styled Narteśvara, in the 18th year of king Layaha Chandra Deva by Bhabu Deva, son of Kusuma Deva, ruler of Karmānta. This inscription, on the pedestal of an image of Naṭarāja, throws light on the popularity of the dancing form of Śiva in this part of the country. It is interesting that Naṭnagar, in Tippera district, where still a Naṭarāja image is worshipped, shows the pedilection of the devotees for this aspect of Śiva (The Bharalla Nartteśvara image inscription, *Jour. Asia. Soc. Bengal*, 1914-15).

Similarly, the term also occurs in inscriptions from Cambodia, mentioning the preparation in metal of the special form of dancing Śiva. In one of the Sambor Prei Kuk inscriptions of



In one of the Prasat Ta Keo inscriptions of Sūryavarman, also from Cambodia, the installation of some golden images, like Tripuradahaneśvara, Tribhuvanañjaya Viṣṇu and his consort, Bhagavatī Śrī, is mentioned, and more interesting, the dancing form of Śiva, here styled Śrī Nāṭakeśvara, with ten hands, *daśa-bhuja*. Though the inscription is in Khmer, the name of the deity is especially noteworthy, as it adds one more to the numerous appellations for dancing Śiva, both in India and outside.

How interesting has been this form in the islands of South Asia, where it was as popular as in the mainland of India itself, is clear from the fact that the invocatory stanza of the Prabh Khan inscription of Sūryavarman I is as full of extravagant fancy regarding the terrific *tāṇḍava* leaps of Śiva. The dance of the moon-crested God, gladdening his consort and wonderfully gazed at by Brahmā and other celestials, even in its sportive light footsteps, with only the fore-part of the foot touching the ground, bends the earth, terrifies the quarters, makes the frightened Lord of the celestials shriek, totters the celestial cars in the sky, with the blasts raised by his hands, with his limbs dwarfing space, his gesticulation admirable by the delineation of the nine flavours, his dress complete by the garland and jewels created almost by the flashing rays of light issuing from his body: *śrīmatpādāgralīlāvanamitadharanīkshobhasamkshobhikāśhṭham bhrāmyatkrandatsurendram bhujabalapanais samskhalatsadvimanaiḥ svāṅgais svalpikṛitāśamnavarasaruchibhir viṣphuradraśmīmālyair nātyam brahmādisēvyam sukhayatu dayitānandanam chandramauleḥ* (B.E.F.E.O. 4, p. 674).

the cause of creation. Even thoughts centered on him give bliss, not to speak of his manifestation. That is Prabhāseśvara of Champā city: *yo brahmavishṇutridaśādhipādīsuraśurabrahmanṛiparshimānyaḥ tathāpi bhūtyai jagatām anṛityachchhmasānabhūmavati chitram etat* (Inscriptions of Champā, Book 3, p. 20).

It is amazing to find how the imagination of the poet composing the inscription has worked. There are innumerable descriptions, each one with its own interesting idea, but all of them always with a common purpose of presenting one or the other aspect of the great master's difficult dance, *duḥkhaṇṛita*, mentioned by Viśākhadatta in his *Mudrārākṣasa*.

The use of pun has brought the peacock and the blue-throated Śiva together in dance. In the Bherāghāt stone inscription of Narasimha, blue-necked Śiva, fond of wielding spear and missile, adorned with the juvenile moon on his crest, exulting in *tāṇḍava* dance, is made one with the peacock, blue-necked, delighting in the spearwielder (Skanda), with its tail adorned with variegated moon-like spots, also exulting in dance: *śaktihetiparaprītihetuś chandrakacharchitaḥ tāṇḍavādāmbaraḥ kuryānṇilakaṇṭhaḥ priyāṇi vaḥ* (Corp. Inscr. Ind. 4, 315).

Violent Tāṇḍava

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ture in itself. In the Harsha stone inscription, it is a picture of how Śiva's dance steps press the earth to bend low, even as it rests on Śeṣha's hoods, his uplifted arms raise up the sun and the moon, in fact, change the position of everything in the universe: *pādanyāsāvanunnā namati vasumati śeṣhabhogāvalagnā bāhūtkshepāis samam. . . rkkachandraiḥ bhinnāvastham samastam bhavati hi bhuvanam yasya nṛitte pravṛitte sa śrīharṣābhīdhāno jayati paśupatiṛ dattaviśvānukampah* (Epigraph. Ind. 2, p. 119).

In another, the Koni inscription of the Kalachuri Prithvideva II, this is again described differently. Śiva's *tāṇḍava* dance causes the earth to sink by the tread of his feet, frightening the Lokapālas, the mountains striking one another as his hands violently move, scaring away even the quarters, the sharp tip of the *khaṭvāṅga* weapon in his hand tearing up the globe of the universe: *pādanyāsanamatkshutiprivilasaddohkaṇḍachāṇḍabhrāmibhrāntaprāntanagābhīghātavidadhaddikpālaparyākulam khaṭvāṅgotkaṭakoṭi-ghṛīṣṭivichāṭadbrahmāṇḍamuddāmaram pāyāt tāṇḍavadambaram purabhido devasya vas sarvadā* (Epigraph. Ind. 27, p. 280).

An inscription from Ranod gives the fearful result of the violent thud of Śiva's dancing feet, sinking the primal tortoise itself, that holds aloft the earth. Dhūrjaṭi's (Śiva's) dance treads, sinking the earth, pushes down the large shell of the primal tortoise, bearing the earth, in the simple monosyllabic rhythm, *varṇaparish-kāriṇī*: *charaṇabharāvanatāvanivīnamatkamaṭhorukarpparābhogā nātyasya dhūrjaṭer dhuri varṇaparish-kāriṇī jayati* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 354).

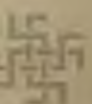
How the movement of the hands of Śiva in dance plays havoc, is the theme of another description from the Anbil plates of Sundarachaḷa. Śiva's club-like arms, thrown up in *tāṇḍava* dance, to reach the limits of the quarters, frightening all the Devas and Asuras, by the deep rumble from the caverns of the noblest mountains, thrown together by the force so generated, make them all apprehend an untimely deluge, a veritable destruction of the world *samhāra*: *ye vegākṛīṣṭaviśvāchalavalayamahāghavarodyanninādaavyābhītāśeshadevāsura parikalitākāṇḍasamhāraśāṅkāḥ āśāchakrāvasānāvadhī parivisritās tāṇḍavavyāpṛitās te bāhādaṇḍās chiram vo vidadhatu mahatīm bhūtim ardhendumauleḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 15, p. 59).

An inscription from Khajuraho further describes Śiva's dance of the deluge. This violent

movement causes the whole fleet of Kulaparvatas, noble mountains, to reel and fall with their massive forms whirling in an eddy, causing the pathetic trumpeting of the elephants of the quarters supporting them, the expanse of the earth scattered up to the ends of the seven oceans, the heavenly mountain Meru rendered peakless by its being torn asunder: *tūrṇam ghūrṇati yatra gotraśīkharivyūhas samūhaḥ patatyatyāvarititamūrtir ārtavirutam kurvan kakupkūmbhinām saptāmbodhyavadhipradhūtavasudhābandhaḥ kaban-dhīkṛitasvarggādriḥ kshayakāṇḍatāṇḍavavidhis śaivas śivāyāstu vah* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 140).

This flight of huge mountains is described in another interesting verse from a Kadamba inscription from Gujarat, which brings to one's mind the old story of mountains with wings flying about, to the utter terror of the denizens of heaven and earth, resulting in Indra clipping their wings with his thunderbolt. The verse from the Ganderi stone inscription describes Śiva's violent *tāṇḍava* dance, producing blasts by the wild movements of his numerous arms, speeding up troops of mountains to fly up, when Indra is forced to look to his thunderbolt, again to clip their wings, which he supposed they had regained: *sandhyātāṇḍavadambavarayasano bhīmasya chaṇḍabhrāmī vyānṛityadbhujadaṇḍamaṇḍalabhuvo jhamjhamilāḥ pāntu vah yeshām utsabhavam javena jhagiti vyūheshu bhūmībhrītām uddīneshu bīḍaujasā punar asau dambholir alokitāḥ* (Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State, 1, p. 67).

Naturally, when the mountains spring and fly up and come down by the sheer force of the movement of the hands of Śiva, they look very much like balls, as a tumbler or a trickster plays with them with his hands, head, shoulder, chest or back, as the case may be. It shows his dexterity at managing simultaneously so many of them. In fact, there are sculptural representations of *Kuḍamāṭṭam*, or a dance with pitchers thrown up, received on any part of the upper body and tossed up again to be received back, again to be thrown up. This was a favourite dance in Kerala, and there are beautiful medieval sculptures showing Śiva himself engaged in this, a folk dance. An inscription from near Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh describes Śiva violently striking mountains, which spring up and fall down like balls, keeping time to his dance movements: *udvellanātibharanirbharahastashaṇḍa-chaṇḍābhīghātaraḥasotpatadadrijālaiḥ yah kankair iva kṛitātulātālakelir nṛitte babhau sa bhavabhid bhavatād bhavo vah* (Epigraph. Ind. 31, p. 35).



The impact of Śiva's unfettered movements is the subject of another verse of a Kalachuri inscription. Śiva's *tāṇḍava* dance bends down the hoods of the Lord of the snakes, as the earth bowl reels by the movement of his feet, adept in *chārīs*, the elephants of the quarters flee in fear, and his staff-like hands in action cause the top of the universe to revolve, all to the deep sound of the *ḍamaru* drum: *chārīsamcharaṇa-praviṇacharaṇavyāpāraṇāghūrṇitakṣhoṇikuṇḍanamatphaṇīśvaraphaṇam vidrāṇadigvāraṇam dordāṇḍabramanād akāṇḍachalitabrahmāṇḍakhaṇḍam mude bhūyād vo nibīḍakkvaṇaḍḍamarukam chaṇḍīpates tāṇḍavam* (Epigraph. Ind. 21, p. 149).

In another verse, there is not only the narration of the disposition of the lifted leg (*daṇḍapāda*) of Śiva, the Victor of the Tripuras in his *tāṇḍava* dance on the difficult stage chosen, hitting the planets and stars, before coming back to position, as the earth itself disappears, with its surface kicked down by the weight of the other leg, leaving the divine dancer to do the *chārī* gyrations as movements in the sky, *gaganachārīs*, but also the mention of technicalities of dance, like the *daṇḍapāda* and, the *chārīs* specially as *gaganachārīs*, as opposed to *bhūchārīs*: *utkshipto daṇḍapādo grahagaṇam uḍubhis sārḍham uttambhya bhūyaḥ prāyād yāvat svasīmām aparapada-bharabhrasṭhāprishṭhā kva bhūmiḥ ittham dausthye'pi raṅge gaganatalachalachchārīkāchāravṛttes trāyantām vas trisandhyam tripuravijayinas tāṇḍavakriḍitāni* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 354-5).

Yet another verse from the same inscription gives a vivid picture of how the assembled witnesses of his dance are worried, as they watch his matchless dance, full in all respects and delineating the nuances of *lāsya*, which is the delicate part of dance, even which threatens the stability of mount Kailāsa. The joyous dance of Śiva, the destroyer of all sins, in terms of *lāsya* chosen, full-limbed and complete, though with its special *sthānakas*, with the pat of his soles, shaking the stability of mount Kailāsa, simultaneously causes fear in the agitated assembly of Devas and Asuras: *sampūrṇāṅgam aśeshakalmashamushas sampannam apyādarād dūram pādatalāvaghaṭṭananamatkailāsanaśyasthiti sānandam yugapatsurāsurasabhāsamrambhadatavyatham sambhor lāsya-parigrahasya diśatu śreyāmsi vas sthānakam* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 354).

Tāṇḍava and Lāsya in one: Ardhanārīśvara

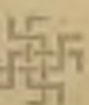
The mention of the *lāsya* mode, in addition to the violent *tāṇḍava* of Śiva, recalls a theme so

popular in Kāvya literature, of Ardhanārīśvara, distributing in his own body the spheres of the softer and more pronounced forms of dance—*svāṅge vibhaktam dvidhā*. In the Naihati grant of Vallālasena, there is a graphic description of Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara dancing, dividing *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* in his two halves of body, by his delicate *aṅgahāras* on one side and terribly violent movements on the other, succeeding in the difficult task of marking the distinction between two modes of the language of gesture, as the *nāṇḍī* notes of music move, as waves, on the limitless expanse of the ocean of *rasa*: *sandhyā-tāṇḍavasamvidhānavilasannāṇḍinīnāḍormibhir nirmaryādarasārṇavo diśatu vas śreyo'rdhanārīśvaraḥ jasyārdhe lalitāṅgahāraḥavalanair ardhe cha bhīmodbhaṭair nāṭyārambharayair jayatyabhinayadvaidhānu-rodhaśramaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 14, p. 159).

The poet, who composed another royal charter, admires the footprints of Ardhanārīśvara, left on the sand after the dance. Śiva and Devī as one (Ardhanārīśvara), sporting on the sand dunes of Gaṅgā, leave footprints, marked red *yāvaka* and *bhasma*, for the accomplishment of creation (*niyama* same as *śrīṣṭi*): *girisutāhara-yor avibhinmayor viharator niyamārtham avantu vaḥ sarasayāvaka bhasmavichitritās tripathagāpuline padapaṅktayaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 32, p. 51). There is also clear reference here to Śiva's dance of creation. It is this that Kālidāsa has aptly put in his description of the function of Ardhanārīśvara: *striṇṇamsāvātmabhāgau te bhinnamūrtes śīrīkṣhayā prasūtibhājas sargasya tāveva pitarau smṛitau* (Kumārasambhava 2, 7).

Śiva's Dance Gathers Momentum

As Śiva gathers momentum in his dance, there is even more of the agitation of the universe, which is presented in yet another verse from the Bilhari Cheḍi inscription. The poet here claims a talent, that could be appreciated by a great contemporary poet and literary critic, Rājaśekhara. It is a tremendous picture of the dance of the Victor of Tripuras, in which the quarters recede by the forceful blasts raised by his massive arms, steadily become terrific, through graceful movements. When his full energy is put into the act of dance, the sky rises up high, and the earth goes down by his violent *chārīs* or gyrations: *dikshu preṅkhābhīyogapravalitavalanāvibhramākāṇḍachandair dordāṇḍānām prakāmaprathimabhir anilair dūram utsāritāsu kim cha prasphārachārīnamadavanivaśād vyomni yāte mahattām avyād avyāhatechchham tripuravijayinas tāṇḍavāḍambaram vaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 1, p. 254).



In a Rāshtrakūṭa inscription of Nannapa, the tremendous action of just a *sūchīpāda*, in the course of the foot movement of Śiva, is graphically described as the Lord dances; the earth, shaken by the touch of the *sūchīpāda* of his foot, the Lord of snakes, supporting the earth, trembles under the tread and uplifting of the foot, the milky ocean looks like a white banner fluttering, and more than all, the hands moving, appear like mountains, with recovered wings, flying about: *sūchīpātena sadyaḥ prachalati vasudhā kampate nāgarājāḥ padoddhāreṇa nīto dhvaja iva dhavalō dugdhasindhur vibhāti dor-daṇḍaiś cha bhramadbhiḥ punarapi girayo jātapak-shāḥ prayānti yasminnittham prañṛitte bhavati jagad idam so'stu bhūtyai bhavo vaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 32, p. 115).

Varied Fancy on Gaṅgā Spilt

There are other verses from inscriptions where, like the movements of the arms or feet of Śiva, movements of the head, particularly with the spilling of the Ganges, of the ambrosia of the moon, form a theme for varied fancy. In Anna Vema's Vanapalli plates, the heavenly river Mandākinī is described as impetuous and dancing on the matted hair coil of Śiva himself, the great dancer Mahānāṭa; and by use of a pun, the poet's fancies that Mandākinī's sweet sounding spray of drops (lit. anklets), *kaṅkaṇa kaṅkaṇa*, means both anklet and drops of water—should be composed into the sweet composition of the poet (meaning himself), favourite of Śārādā and learned in Śaiva lore. This poet, Trilochanāchārya, makes even the river Ganges a great dancer, by association with the Mahānāṭa; and even so, his own gush of poetry he compares to the sweet sound of the anklets of a divine dancer, particularly to the stream of the heavenly river herself: *mahā-nāṭajātāchchhātānāṭadamandamandākinikalakvaṇita-kaṅkaṇavrajaviḥṛimbhivāggumbhanaḥ kaviḥ kaviku-lodbhavo bhuvanabhavyadivyodayas śivāgamaviśāra-do jayati śārādāvallabhāḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 3, p. 63).

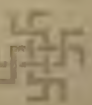
In the Karepatan plates of Rājārāja, a *māṇḍalika* subordinate ruler, there is described Śiva's *tāṇḍava* dance, in which the toe of his *daṇḍapāda* hits Gaṅgā as he lifts it up towards his head, and from her pearl oysters drop pearls into the *kapāla*, skull cap, held in his hand, and the skeleton, revived by the ambrosia dripping from the moon, makes Śiva smile. The smile of the skulls revived by drops of ambrosia presents a grim picture of humour and hints at the deluge and revivification. Elsewhere we are told that the skulls Śiva

wears are not ordinary ones, but of the highest celestials, whose long existence of aeons is but a drop in eternity, Śiva being the one and only dancer before and after the deluge, and continuing recreation and destruction over again for transformation and transmuting of everything into something new: *helollālitchaṇḍa-daṇḍacharaṇāṅgushṭhāgrabhāgāhatasvargaṅgodgata-suktisamputagalanmuktābhritām tāṇḍave pāṇau vik-shya kapālam āśvatha jāṭāchandrāmṛitojjīvitam kaṅ-kālam cha yad adbhutam smitam avatviśena tad vaś chiram* (Epigraph. Ind. 3, p. 297).

In the Orissa plate of Vidyādhara Bhañja-deva, the lofty waves of the Ganges are likened to various noble objects in action, including the arms of Śiva thrown up in dance. Here again, it is the idea of the Gaṅgā, almost like a *naṭī* or dancer, imitating the dance of Śiva. The upsurging waves of the heavenly river, the waters that destroy all sins, look like the hoods of the serpent Śeṣha, bright in a flood of moon-light, or like the tall peaks of the snow-clad Himālaya, moving in violent action, or like the arms of Śiva, spread out and thrown up, in the ecstasy of dance: *śeṣhāher iva ye phaṇāḥ pravilasantyudbhāsvarendutviśaḥ prāleyāchalaśrīṅ-gakoṭaya iva tvaṅganti ye'tyunnatāḥ nṛitātōpavighaṭ-ṭitā iva bhujā rājanti ye śāmbhavās te sarvāghavi-ghaṭṭinas surasarittoyormayaḥ pāntu vaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 9, p. 275).

In another verse, the poet gives a picture of Śiva's dance against a starlit sky in the evening, but the stars here are every minute created by Śiva himself. The Lord in his dance scatters Ganges water from his locks, to appear like stars in the sky: *sa punātu pinākī yo yannāṭye swardhunījalām kīṇam rechakavātena tārakāprakarāyitam* (Epigraph. Ind. 29, p. 153).

The fancy of the poet of the stone inscription of Brahmadeva, in regard to the same theme, is even more vivid. As Śiva dances, the drops of Ganges water on his head look like pearl adornment, jasmine flowers in his lovely creeper-like locks, graceful necklets on his neck, a handful of flowers in his palms, brought together as in a cup, like a rain of flowers on the earth and stars in the sky. This is a happy expression of the *talapushpapuṭa*, the very first *karāṇa*, when flowers are strewn. This is a delightful picture of the commencement of the dance, with the drops of Gaṅgā picture-squely described as flowers scattered: *maulau mauktikavibhramāḥ prithujātāvallīshu mallinibhāḥ kaṇṭhe hāravihārīṇo'ñjalipuṭe phullaprasūnaprabhāḥ*



*bhūmau pātita pushpavṛṣṭirachanā tārāruchaś chām-
bare sambhor vas sukhadā bhavantu naṭato gāṅgāḥ
payobindavaḥ* (Corp. Inscr. Ind. 4, p. 571).

Skulls Revived

In an inscription from Bhubaneśvar, of the time of Aniyaṅka Bhīma of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty, there is a verse, the idea of which is as grim as that of the skeletons and skulls come back to life, already mentioned. As Śiva dances, the flames of the third eye warm and pour a stream of ambrosia, from the moon, that revivify the rows of skulls worn by Śiva, which, creating the impression of the single Rāhu multiplied, so frightens the moon, that he runs into the jungles of *jaṭās* and caverns of the heavenly river, on the crest of the great Dancer. The idea here of the life restored to skulls, without the body, creates a weird picture of innumerable Rāhus moving about, and naturally the fear experienced by the moon, proverbially swallowed by Rāhu, gives the reason for the fear exhibited by the lunar crescent: *vidyutpiṅgalabhālalochnaśikhijvālāgalat-
svāmṛitasrotassparśanañjivītās śavaśiraśśreṇīs śive
nṛityati eko rāhur anekatām gata iti trāsād iva
prekshya tās chandras sāndrajaṭātāvīsurasariddurgā-
śritāḥ pātu vaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 6, p. 200).

Kailāsa is no Dance Hall

In an inscription from Chitorgarh, the purpose of providing for Śiva a beautiful temple there, again alludes to Śiva's fondness for *tāṇḍava* dance, which, according to the poet's fancy, is no longer safe on the Kailāsa hill. The poet feels that Kailāsa, shaken to its foundations by Rāvaṇa, is most unsafe for Śiva to dance on. So he is now safely settled on the pleasant Chitrakūṭa hill at Chitorgarh: *giriḥ
kailāso yad daśamukhabhujochchhṛvāsanaḍinād galan-
mūlasthāmā prabhavati na nātyam viśahitum pra-
deśaprāgbhāraprakṛitiramaṇīye tad adhunā samiddhe-
śas śṛīman iha vasati gaurisahacharaḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 2, p. 420).

Śiva Dances and Expounds Grammar

From Ujjain, the great sacred spot for dancing Śiva, specially mentioned by Kālidāsa, with regard to the evening dance of Mahākālā, comes a Paramāra inscription of Udayāditya, that not only alludes to the Dancer, but to the sound produced by him on his drum, when, as the great Grammarian or the Lord of the science of language, he revealed the fourteen Māheśvara *sūtras* to Pāṇini; and in a composition of the *chitra* type *nāgakṛipāṇikā*, the *sūtras* are arranged. Śiva as Mahākālā is the

great dancer and his emblem is *vyotirliṅga* at Ujjain. This *Praśasti* gives, not only the great qualities of Śiva as a *Yogi*, but also describes him as the great Grammarian; and the Māheśvara *sūtras* and the letters, *varṇas*, are arranged in *varṇa-nāgakṛipāṇikā-bandha*. Here Śiva is mentioned as in the *hṛitpuṇḍarika*, the lotus of the heart as in Chidaṁbaram. It is the same idea of Śiva dancing in the lotus of the heart, and Chidaṁbaram itself is Puṇḍarika-kshetra, the lotus spot. The plate, illustrating the text of the inscription, gives a vivid picture of this *chitrabandha*, with the Māheśvarasūtras or Śiva-sūtras cleverly introduced into it. The tradition of Śiva, revealing himself as the great grammarian, even as he dances and sounds the drum, is very significant. One has to recall here the usual verse in the study of Sanskrit grammar, particularly the *sūtras* of Pāṇini, *nṛitāvāsāne naṭarājarājo nanāda dhakkām navapañ-
chavāram uddhartukāmas sanakādisiddhān etad vi-
marśe śivasūtrajālam*.

A telling verse from the *Stotrasamuchchaya* graphically describes how, as Śiva danced, arose from the drum, the fourteen *sūtras*, which were analysed and expounded by sage Pāṇini in his own *sūtras*, in clear exposition of nouns and verbs composing grammar: *sūtrāṇi prathi-
tāni yasya naṭane dhakkotthitānyādītas samśodhyaiva
chaturdaśa svayam udāhārshīn munih pāṇinīḥ sūtrair
ātmakṛitais sphuṭārthaghaṭanam suptiṇpadavyākṛitim
vande tam jalakaṇṭhadevam anīṣam vandāruchintā-
maṇim* (Jalakaṇṭheśvaraśatakam 52).

Ashes to Purify

The Western Chālukyan inscription of Tribhuvanamalla Vikramāditya VI, from Muni-rabād, has an interesting verse describing the dance of Śiva smeared with ashes. He claps his hands, shakes the solar and lunar globes, causes the world serpent Śeṣha to stoop under the weight of his foot-tread, and splashes up the ocean by his vigorous movements: *prachali-
taravīndumaṇḍalam ākuñchitāśesham uchchalajjala-
dhiḥ uddhūlitasya śambhor ubhayakarāsphālanam
jayati* (Hyd. Arch. Series No. 5, p. 5).

Pañchakṛitya

The Vaṇnagar *praśasti* of Kumārapāla delineates a charming picture of Śiva dancing, playing with crystal balls as if they were new and ever newly created planets of the universe, all of which come into existence by his exercising his *ichchhāśakti*, or the mere potency of desire to create: *brahmādvaitadhiyā mumukshubhir
abhidhyātasya baddhāksharair ichchhāśaktim abhi-*

shṭavīmi jagatām patyus śrutinām nidheḥ yā vyā-pāritasamhritais svasamayam brahmāṇḍapīṇḍair navaiḥ kṛīḍanti maṇikandukair iva sadā svachchhandam āhlādate (*His. Inscr. of Gujarat* 2, Chāulukya, p. 41).

It is well known that this is one of the *pañchakṛitya* of Śiva as Naṭarāja, viz., creation, protection, dissolution, removal of illusion and liberation. In fact, another inscription from Gujarat, Śrīdhara's Devapatan *praśasti*, describes the *pañchakṛitya* or all these five acts, *upāsmahe param tatvam pañchakṛityaikakāraṇam* (*His. Inscr. of Gujarat* 2, Chāulukya, p. 104).

Thunderous Foot Pats

The rhythmic dance steps of Śiva, with their thunderous sound of the stamp of the feet, compose an excellent picture, as a comparison with the deafening sound of the cavalry of the Kākatīya army on the move. The inscription compares Śiva's dance, as a terrifying factor, the sound of his steps comparable to the uninterrupted thuds of the hoofs of the horses, composing the cavalry, chisel-like cutting the earth, submerging the quarters in dust, the terrible sound of the large drums driving terror into the hearts of enemy kings, and closely resembling the wild sound of the drum of Hara, sportingly beaten, as he dances at the end of the *kalpa*: *yadghāṭi ghoṭakotīprakarakhurapuṭatroṭīṭaṅkapraṇāḍikshuṇṇakshoṇipradeśatruṭadanaṇura-jassnāpītāśāvākāśaḥ dripyatkalpāntahelāhataharaḍamarūddāmarasphārabheribhāṅkārodbhīmabhūribhramāṇabhayabhṛitārātibhūpā bhramanti* (*Hyd. Arch. Series* 6, p. 5).

Beautifying Naṭarāja

The tradition of beautifying important bronze images of the Chōlas by setting them with the largest and the most magnificent gems obtained as war trophies, after difficult battles, has been wonderfully illustrated in the precious gems that adorn the forehead of Śiva as Somāskanda at Tiruvālūr, Naṭarāja at Chidambaram and others. It is learnt from the Kanyākumārī inscription of Virarājendra that king Virachōla, alias Karikāla, destroyer of the manifold strength of the Kali age, placed the ruby, called Trailokyasāra, on the crown of the dancer, in the Dabhrasabhā (Naṭarāja), who is the Lord of the daughter of the mountain, Pārvatī: *devasyādrisutādhipasya mahatas trailokyasārābhīdham śrīmad dabhrasabhānaṭasya makule māṇikyam āropitam manye vairikula... ntrani-javasakritasa... stanussamāropitaḥ* (Kanyākumārī

Inscription of Virarājendra, *Travancore Archaeological Series* 3, p. 148).

Onomatopoeic

In the introductory discussion, in the Kanyākumārī plate of Balarāmavarman, an 18th century ruler of Travancore, there are two exceedingly fine invocatory verses, quoted from the Balarāmabhārata, composed by Balarāmavarman, one describing the dancing form of Śiva and the other of Devī. These two verses happily present a great feeling for Bharatanāṭya, and the Kathakālī tradition of Travancore must have also in no small measure helped the poet to run into onomatopoeic ecstasy. The dance of Śambhu is most triumphant, with the bracelets sounding, *jhalam jhalam*, the feet patting the ground, *takat, takat*, the anklets jingling, *kvaṇa, kvaṇa*, resplendent with the resounding name of *hara, hara*, the large drum *duṇḍubhi* heavily filling the air with the sound, *dhimi, dhimi*, and the *mardala* drums resounding, *dhanad, dhanad*. Here is a stress on the rhythmic part of pure *nṛitta*, where *tāla* is, specially emphasised: *jhalam jhalitakaṅkaṇam takatakāṅghṛisantāḍitam kvaṇatkvaṇitanūpuram harahareti śabdojjvalam dhimiddhimitadundubhidhvanighanākulam maddalair ddhaṇaddhaṇaghanadhvanāṇjayati tāṇḍavam śāmbhavam* (Kanyākumārī Inscription of Balarāmavarman, *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. 4, p. 107).

Abhinaya of Devī

In the next verse, there is an equally effective picture of the *abhinaya* of Devī, and her *lāsyā* part presented. 'May the Beloved of the God of Dance protect, who is herself an adept in *abhinaya*, i.e. gesticulation, and from whom wonderfully blooms forth emotion, as she dances with new and ever new aesthetic creation in dance, music and rhythm, who is effulgent like the sun, beautified all the more by the fine play of the eighteen limbs, adept in the rapid movements of the *karaṇas*: *navanavanavasārair nātyasaṅgītātālair abhinayakuśalā sā chādbhutollasabhāvā dinakararuchibhāsā śobhitāshṭādaśāṅgaiḥ karaṇagatividagdhair nartiteśapriyāvṛāt* (Kanyākumārī Inscription of Balarāmavarman, *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. 4, p. 107).

Padmanābha Fond of Dance

Balarāmavarman is so fond of the fine arts—his passion for music and dance is well known from his inscription—that he dreams of Padmanābha appearing like a child, meaning here Bālakṛishṇa, dancing before him. Lord Padmanābha, who sleeps on the gigantic lord of snakes,

is victorious, who is immensely fond of dance, assumes the juvenile form of dance with glee, during the ceremony of worship, to test the devotion of his adorer: *yogīndrabhaktipariśodhanakāraṇena pūjāntare naṭanam ātanutātihrishṭah yo bālavesam upagamyā sa padmanābho nṛitapriyo jayati tuṅgaphaṇīndraśāyī* (Kanyākumārī Inscription of Balarāmavarman, *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. 4, p. 107).

Contradictory Qualities

An interesting inscription from Nepal, with some of the verses composed by the king himself, mentions the dedication of a temple for Śiva Paśupati. Here the dance of Śiva, sky-clad, though the Lord of all, without any sense of shame, is mentioned as itself a praise, as the lord is above all formal worldly etiquette. The adorable Sthānu, is resplendent with contradictory qualities, and his glory is sung by Brahmā, of great majesty with his four faces,

by Kumāra with his six faces, as he bows at his feet, by ten-headed Rāvaṇa, with his necks springing, by Vāsuki, with glittering hoods with a thousand tongues; though he is the Supreme Lord he is sky-clad, though he pervades the universe, he is atomic, though he bestows all welfare, he is yet the destroyer of the world, though he is the only One, he has eight bodies, and though revered by gods and demons alike, he dances without any sense of shame: *yam stauti prakṛāprabhāvamahimā brahmā chaturbhir mukhaiḥ yam cha ślāghayati praṇamya charaṇe śaḍbhir mukhais śaṇmukhaḥ yam tushṭāva daśānana'pi daśabhir vaktrais sphuratkandharas sevām yasya karoti vāsukir alam jihvāsahasrais stuvan/ khyātyā yaḥ paramēśvaro'pi vahate vāso diśām maṇḍalam vyāpī sūkshmataras cha śaṅkaratayā khyātopi samhāraḥeko'pyashṭatanus surāsuragurur vītatrapo nṛityati sthānuḥ pūjyatamo virājati guṇair evam viruddhair api* (Inscriptions from Nepal, No. 15, 26-27, p. 18).



VARIETIES OF NATARAJA AS DESCRIBED IN SILPA TEXTS

Sakalādhikāra

The iconography of Natarāja according to the texts is an equally fascinating study. The text *Sakalādhikāra* gives a descriptive account of Śiva's dance. There are detailed specifications for the form of Śiva, which are especially for technical guidance in the assembling of the parts composing the figure in the process of its creation.

The main description pertains to a picture of the dance of Śiva itself, which invites attention. This has reference to the origin of *bhujāṅga-trāsita*, which is the normal type of dance of Śiva, as seen in all temples in South India, mostly in bronze, but also in stone, in niches on the south of the central cell of Śiva's shrine, in addition to the figure of Dakṣiṇāmūrti; but this is where the temple is not very simple and austere, but has a little more of elaboration, and can afford to have in between Gaṇeśa and Dakṣiṇāmūrti, one or two more figures, like Bhikṣhātana, Kālāri and Naṭeśa. At the beginning of an aeon after the deluge, Śiva commences his dance, surrounded by his Gaṇas, headed by Nandi, Bhūtas, Kinnaras and Yakshas. He has also around him the eight Lokapālas, Siddhas who have attained all the eight *siddhis* and *ṛiddhis*, the great sages, with their consorts, and Skanda and Gaṇeśa, seated on their vehicles. Kālāri, Kātyāyanī, the seven Mātṛikās and the sixty-four Yoginīs with all the celestials surround him, singing hymns in his praise. Shy and coy, Pārvatī stands a little behind, to the left, in a charming triflex stance. To the right is Nandikeśvara, four-armed, three-eyed, playing the drum, held in two of his hands, and with his other left hand raised up in *alapallava*, suggestive of wonder, as if to tell the audience how admirable is the dance of Śiva.

Śiva dances under a banyan tree. Just as he commences Karkoṭaka, the snake king, darts at his leg, when his dance assumes a position with the name equal to the occasion, i.e. *bhujāṅga-trāsita*, frightened by a snake. This important dance stance of Śiva has been elaborately described in regard to every detail of measurement, and arrangement of limbs.

After the elaboration of details of measurements, there is the picturesque description of ornaments, attire and other decorative elements. The *jaṭābhāra* of the head-gear is loosened to swirl on both sides in long strands. The face wears a smile. The body is lustrous with the white of sacred ashes. The Ganges, snake, lotus and *dhattūra* flower decorate the crest, along with a skull and dazzling gems. To the left is the crescent moon, what adds charm to the smiling face. Above the forehead, there is a gem-decked fillet. A necklace of *rudrāksha* beads hangs on the chest as a decoration, red with *sindūra*. The tiger skin serves as attire, over a short cloth, worn with its ends loose. The waist-band is of intricate workmanship. Other ornaments are serpents, as bracelets, golden rings, a jewelled necklace and the tight-fitting necklace, *upagrīva*. He dances with his right leg firmly set on Apasmāra, whose dark complexion is in contrast to his dishevelled red hair and frightened face. This malignant dwarf holds a snake in his left hand, and poses with his right hand the *sarpaśīrsha*, suggestive of a serpent hood.

This is an elaborate picture of Śiva and is best followed in the lithic representation of Natarāja in a niche to the south of the main shrine at Gaṅgaikōṇḍacholapuram (Fig. 1). Here dancing Śiva, with his leg raised in *bhujāṅga-trāsita*, and with hands in *karihasta* and *abhaya*, carrying the drum and fire, is typical of the form of the period in the south. But around him, on either side of the niche, there are sculptures in relief, which completely tally with this elaborate iconographic description. Seated to the right of dancing Śiva is Nandikeśvara, with four hands, the lower ones manipulating the drum, while the other left hand is held up in *alapadma* to suggest wonder. Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya on their respective vehicles are shown above. Surrounding Nandikeśvara are the other Gaṇas of whom he is the chief. To the left, in graceful flexion, stands Pārvatī, bashful but extremely beautiful.

Śritattvanidhi

The text, *Śritattvanidhi*, describes seven *tāṇḍavas* of Śiva. The first is *Ānandatāṇḍava*. Here

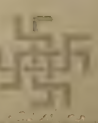




FIG. 1. *Natarāja*, Early Chōla, 11th century A.D., Gaṅgaikōṇḍacholapuram, Tiruchirāpalli Distt.

Śiva has four hands and three eyes. His *jaṭās* are spread out and are in sharp contrast to the fair complexion of his body and the picturesque effect produced by the peacock feathers decorating his head. The *dhatūra* flower is to the left on his crest, along with the crescent moon, while to the right there is Gaṅgā, at one end of a spread out *jaṭā*. On the left lobe there is a *karnapatra*, a rolled strip of palm leaf, and a *makarakuṇḍala* on the right ear. He is decked with all the ornaments, including the *yajñop-*

vita, and has as his attire the hide of the tiger. On his legs are tinkling anklet bells. The right hand is in *abhaya*, the left extended in *gajahasta*, the top right holding the drum and the corresponding left holding the fire. While the right leg firmly rests on *Apasmāra*, the left leg is raised directed to the right.

The next is *Sandhyātāṇḍava*. Here he has again four hands and three eyes, and the *jaṭāmakula*. One of the right hands is in *abhaya*, and the

other holds the drum, while of the hands to the left, one holds a bunch of peacock feathers and the other signifies wonder in the pose of *alapallava*. His foot rests directly on a pedestal by dispensing with *Apasmāra*. The left leg is a little bent, *kuñchita*. His bracelets are serpents. His right leg turns to the left, either raised or bent, *kuñchita*. The complexion of Śiva in this dance form is white, as in the earlier one.

The next *tāṇḍava* is *Umātāṇḍava*. Here, he has three eyes and six arms and wears a *jaṭāmaṇḍala*. He is fair in complexion. To the right, the hands show *abhaya*, hold the drum and *triśūla*, while of the hands to the left, one has a skull and the others have the hand poses expressive of wonder, *alapallava* and *karihasta*. With his left foot on *Apasmāra*, he raises the right foot towards the left. He has Gaṅgā on his head, wears all the ornaments and the tiger skin attire. Goddess *Umā* stands to his left.

Another is *Gauritāṇḍava*. Here Śiva is red in complexion, but with a beautiful countenance. In this aspect he has four hands. There is the skull on his head and the flowers *baka*, *dhatūra* and *arka*. On his scattered *jaṭās* is the crescent moon. He has snakes as his bracelets. With the right leg planted on *Apasmāra* in *kuñchita*, his left leg is raised to the right. One of the hands to the right is in *abhaya*, while the other holds the drum. Of those to the left, the lower one holds the snake, while the upper has the fire. He is accompanied, on his left, by his *Gaṇas* and, on the right, by *Nandikeśvara*. It should be noted here that Gaṅgā is to the left on his *jaṭās*. In all other respects, it exactly conforms to the description of *ānandatāṇḍava*.

The next to be noticed is *Kālikātāṇḍava*. In this aspect, Śiva has only two eyes. The *jaṭās* are bound up and entirely cover his head. It is something like the *jaṭāmakūṭa* in *ushnisha* form. He has eight arms. The right leg is raised aloft, while the left is planted on *Apasmāra* in *kuñchita* fashion. The right hands are in *abhaya*, hold the trident, noose and drum, while the left ones carry the skull cap, fire and bell, the last in the pose *karihasta*, pointing downwards. Fair in complexion, he has the rest of the attributes exactly as in the form of *ānandatāṇḍava*.

The sixth is *Tripuratāṇḍava*. Here Śiva has sixteen hands, the right ones represented in *abhaya*, holding a drum, thunder-bolt, trident, noose, axe, rod and snake, while of the left ones, two are in *karihasta* and *varada* and the



FIG. 2. Śiva dancing, *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, *Nāyak*, 17th century A.D., *Perur*.

rest carry fire, book, bull-banner, shield, bell and skull cap. To his left there is *Gaurī*, whom he caresses, and to the right there is *Skanda*. Śiva is here fair in complexion. In all other respects, this form is very much like the *ānandatāṇḍava* one.

The last is *Samhāratāṇḍava*. Here again, he has three eyes and eight hands. His *jaṭās* are spread out, and of his hands to the right, one is in *abhaya* and the rest hold the trident, noose and drum. Of the left ones, two hands are in *alapallava* and *karihasta*, while the others carry a skull cap, a fire pan. His left foot rests in *kuñchita* fashion on *Apasmāra*, while the right one is raised. His attire is a tiger skin, though he has all the other ornaments. To his right, there is *Nandikeśvara*, and to the left *Gaurī*. He is fair in complexion.

In *Pushpagiri*, there is a representation of *Naṭarāja* in *Kālikātāṇḍava* form. However, instead of the right leg being lifted up, it is the left leg. He dances on *Apasmāra*. He has eight

arms, of which those to the right are in *abhaya*, carrying the *śūla*, noose and drum. His hands to the left are in *karihasta*, and have fire, the bell and a skull cap bowl.

An example of *Tripuratāṇḍava* is given in the striking figure on one of the pillars of the Śiva temple at Perūr near Coimbatore (Fig. 2). He has sixteen arms, as required in the textual description. Of the eight hands to the right, two are in *abhaya*, one sounding the drum held in one of his left hands, and the rest carry a snake, encircling a drum, a *khaṭvāṅga*, *triśūla*, and other objects. Of those to the left, one arranges a flower on the *jaṭā* and the remaining ones carry the fire, noose, skull cap, *nandihvaja*, a deer and probably a book. Below his upraised foot, there is *Kāraikālamaiyār*, just near his upraised right foot. Viṣṇu plays the drum to the left, as Brahmā keeps time to the right. It does not exactly follow the text in every respect, including the disposition to the left, but the number of arms is sixteen as they should be in the case of this *tāṇḍava*.

Śilparatna

According to the *Śilparatna*, there are nine varieties of dance of Śiva described in all the *śilpa* texts. They recognise the 108 *karāṇas* (dance poses) of Śiva that he demonstrated, but those chosen for description in detail are seven or nine. But even these, as pointed out by Gopinatha Rao, do not always follow the texts of Bharata in regard to various *karāṇas*, because the forms chosen are more with an eye to iconography than the mere adherence to the *karāṇas* in dance.

In the first form of dance, the description is of the normal type. The fire could be carried in a small pan or in the hand itself. The corresponding hand to the right carries the drum. The other hand is in *abhaya* and the left in *karihasta*. The forearm of the *abhaya* hand is entwined by a snake. The *jaṭās* are scattered on both sides and a number of snakes here and there decorate them by their arrangement on them. There is a *makūṭa* on the head, with a skull on it. To the right there is a crescent moon. The neck is adorned by a necklace of *rudrāksha* beads and Śiva is bright white with sacred ashes all over. There is the *yajñopavīta* and the tiger skin is his attire. The face beams with a smile. His right leg is planted on Apasmāra, while the left one is lifted up. He holds a snake in one hand, while the other is in *sarpaśīrshaka*, to suggest the snake hoods. To the left is Devī.

The second variety shows Gaṅgā devī at the terminal of the *jaṭās* spread to the right.

The third variety shows Śiva with his left leg on Apasmāra and the right leg lifted up. The rest of the details conform to the first variety.

A fourth variety shows the *jaṭās* dropping downwards, while some of them are tied up in a knot or a *dīpamaṇḍala*. The rest of the details follow the first variety.

The fifth variety shows Śiva, with his right leg lifted up almost to touch his crest. The left leg is a little bent and is planted on Apasmāra. He has eight hands, which show *abhaya*, *śūla*, *pāśa* and *ḍamaru*, to the right, *kapāla*, *agni*, *daṇḍa* and *karihasta*, to the left. To the left, there is Pārvatī. Skanda, rather in fright, holds to the breast or the stomach of his mother. He could also be represented otherwise, as with his two hands joined in devotion. In this way, Śiva is viewed with fear, unbounded affection and wonder by Pārvatī.

The sixth variety has sixteen hands, with *abhaya*, *ḍamaru*, *vajra*, *śūla*, *pāśa*, *kuṭhāra*, *daṇḍa* and *nāga*, to the right, and *gajahasta*, *agni*, *mṛga*, *valaya*, *vallī*, *ghaṇṭā* and *kapāla*, to the left. The left leg of Śiva is on Apasmāra and the right is slightly raised, as in the fifth variety.

The seventh mode shows the eight hands. The *jaṭās* are scattered about in dance. The left leg, in *kuñchita*, rests on Apasmāra. The right leg is slightly raised. Of the four hands to the right, one is in *abhaya* and the rest carry *śūla*, *pāśa* and *ḍamaruka*, while the ones to the left hold the *kapāla*, *agni*, and portray *vismaya* and *gajahasta*. Pārvatī is seated to the left.

The eighth variety is almost in all respects like the earlier one, except that Śiva has six hands there. The hands to the right are in *abhaya* and carry the *ḍamaru* and *śūla*, while the rest, to the left, have the skull cap, *vismaya*, *alapallava* and *gajahasta*. In the fifth and sixth varieties, Śiva has only two eyes. The rest have three eyes.

The ninth variety shows only four arms. The eyes are three. The *jaṭās* are separated and flare out. There is the hand in *abhaya* and carrying the *ḍamaru*, to the right, and to the left, holding fire in a pan and in *gajahasta*, but there is no Apasmāra under the foot, as Śiva dances



on the ground itself. The left foot, slightly *kuñchita*, is on the floor, while the right one has its toe a little raised. This leg is also in *kuñchita*. This is actually the *chatura* type.

Amśumadbhedāgama

In the *Amśumadbhedāgama*, the sixth form of Nāṭeśa shown, with sixteen arms, requires Devī to his left. Baby Skanda holds on to his mother. Devī herself looks on at her husband with affection combined with fear: *dorbhis shoḍaśa-bhir yuktam vāme gaurīsamāyutam skandadhṛigvāmaha-stena savyahastoddhṛitāñjaliḥ skandobhayakarābhy-ām tu mātus stanahṛidāhṛitam evam gaurī samik-shyeśam bhītātisnehavismayāt*. This is repeated almost in the *Śilparatna* also: *skando bhayāt karābhyām tu mātus stanahṛidodarāt nipīḍya vā karābhyām tu vāmabhāgoddhṛitāñjalim evam gaurī nirikshyeśam bhītātisnehavismayāt*.

It almost shows that, when this is repeated, in the case of Gajāsurasamhāramūrti, the themes are almost identical. In fact, Śiva dances after destroying Gajāsura, with the skin as the *prabhāvali*. That is why the *prabhāvali* prescribed for the normal variety of Nāṭarāja is also here suggested, as the model for arrangement of the elephant skin: *prabhāmaṇḍalavachchhesham gaja-charma prakalpayet as Amśumadbhedāgama* would have it. Though stated rather briefly, the idea of Devī to the left of the deity, holding baby Skanda tightly and moving away in fear, is very prominent: *skandoddhṛitāpyumādevī śambhor vāme bhayānvitā (Amśumadbhedāgama)*. The same idea is repeated in the *Śilparatna* also, that is the elephant hide should be arranged like a *prabhāmaṇḍala* and Gaurī, holding Skanda, to the left of Śiva, should be represented as frightened. The stance of Gajāntaka is composed by planting the left leg firmly on the elephant's head, the right leg bent diagonally: *susthitam vāmapādam tu gajasya mastakopari uddhṛitam dakshīṇam pādādam tiryag utkuṭikam bhavet (Amśumadbhedāgama)*.

The proximity of the concept of Kālārimūrti and the dancing Śiva is very clearly revealed in the line, *prathamānṛittamūrttes tu dakṣiṇasthita-pāḍavat vāmapādam tad uddhṛitya kuñchitam tala-muddhṛitam*. Even the foot, or particularly the toe, is firmly planted on the body of the prostrate Yama, just as the foot of Nāṭarāja is placed on the back of Apasmāra, in his *ānanda-tāṇḍava* dance, *aṅguṣṭham uddhṛitāṅghres tu kāla-sya hṛidaye nyaset (Amśumadbhedāgama)*. In the *Uttarakāmikāgama*, the position of Kāla is nearly the same as of Apasmāra and this is made

clear in the line, *apasmāraśarīrasthacharaṇena yuto na vā kālārīr evam ākhyāto (Uttarakāmikā-gama)*.

The special difference between Kālārī and Nāṭarāja is the right hand in *sūchī*, *vāmahastasthasūchikah* and tusk-like teeth protruding from the sides of the mouth, *damsṭrākarālavadanam*, and brows raised up in anger, *raktabhrukūṭilo-chanam*.

In the case of Tripurāntakamūrti, two of the varieties require the left foot to be placed on Apasmāra. It is one thing to show Tripurāntaka, as a solid figure and another in action. When he is in action, the *Amśumadbhedāgama* describes him with his feet bent and placed in the chariot in a moment of action. This would mean either the *ālīḍha* or *pratyālīḍha* pose, with one leg extended forward and the other stretched back, the body itself pulled forward, in action, to wield the bow: *tadeva dakṣiṇam jānu talopari nidhāpayet tatpūrve vāmapādam tu talam nyastvā rathopari (Amśumadbhedāgama)*. This is undoubtedly the seated *ālīḍha* posture of Śiva as Tripurāntaka, so popular in Pallava sculptures and in the huge painting of Tripurāntaka from the Bṛhadiśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr, the greatest masterpiece of painting of the early Chōla period (Fig. 3).

In all these, it is the warrior and the dancer combined. It is a dance of victory and Śiva is always associated with the dance of victory. Even in Dārukāvana, when he commenced his dance, it was to announce his triumph in overcoming Gajāsura, Vyāghrāsura, the Nāga and Apasmāra, all created from the fire, by magical incantations by the confused ṛishis, who tried to fight the Lord of the universe.

Śilpa Prakāśa

The tradition in architectural beautification, through sculptural forms of the deity in Orissa is described in an Orissan *śilpa* text, *Śilpa Prakāśa*. This injunction regarding types of images for beautifying the temple is actually observed in the extant monuments of Orissa. Among the images on the *raha*, the text suggests various images corresponding to the principal deity of the shrine. In a Śiva temple, called Śivas-thāna, it describes images of Śaṅkara-Chandra-śekhara. It should be Nāṭāmbara in a dance pose, or a yogī in yogic *āsana*. In Orissa, it is generally Lakuliśa, who takes the place of Dakṣiṇāmūrti in South India. The term Nāṭāmbara is very important, as this is the



FIG. 3. Śiva in āliḍha seated on chariot fighting Tripuras, Early Chola, 11th century A.D., Brīhadīśvara Temple, Tañjāvūr.

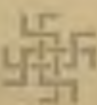
word used for describing Naṭarāja in Orissa, as the term Nartēśvara is used in Bengal, and Naṭeśa or Naṭarāja in South India.

There is a difference made between two forms of dancing figures of Śiva—one in vigorous dance and the other in a dance of delicacy and charm. The former is called Naṭāmbara, who is the same as the Mahākāla in his *ugra-tāṇḍava* or terrific aspect of dance. In the *saumya*, or the more peaceful and charming aspect of delicate expression of dance, he is called Naṭabhairava.

There are various *dhyānaśloka*s given in the *Śilpa Prakāśa* for Naṭāmbara. The *Saudhikāgama* describes a dancing image of Nṛityamūrti of Śiva for crowning the front of the temple. This is how Boner gives it: 'After that the conch is blown, and at that very moment, the chief sculptor has to apply the measuring thread to a stone kept in readiness and begins to carve an image of the Garbhaka Śaṅkara. This image should be a dance image (*nṛitta mūrti*) of Śiva and is destined to crown the front of the temple. He may also carve the image of one of the secondary (*āvaraṇa*) *devatā*s of the temple, but

never the main image for the *garbha-gaṇa*.' This corresponds to Vāmadeva, the principal one among the five Rudras. In the place of Vāmadeva, Naṭāmbara is worshipped, as laid down in the *Śilpa Prakāśa*. Even in the Vāmadeva *dhyāna*, he is described as a dancing figure, with matted reddish hair, adorned with lordly snakes, carrying sword and skull, wearing a garland of skulls, with red eyes, short and fierce teeth, with *liṅga* erect and naked, wearing a sacred thread composed of a snake, emaciated to the bone, carrying the *khaṭvāṅga*, shield and sword, with a corpse on the lance forming an umbrella, as it would seem, and holding the trident and axe. This is the naked type of fierce representation of the dancing deity.

The peaceful one is *saumya*. This is Naṭāmbara No. 2. He is in *tribhaṅga*, with a crown of matted hair, wearing armlets, broad necklaces, ear-rings and wristlets. He is eight-armed, holds a snake aloft by the right and left arms; of the other hands, two to the right carry a *khaṭvāṅga*, a *nāga-pāśa* noose, while the other two are on the hip (*aśṛitamudrā*) and in *varada*: the hands to the left carry the skull-bowl and pose the *daṇḍa hasta*, called *sambhava mudrā* and



abhaya. As he dances he twists his limbs, and wears dance itself, as a garment—*naṭāmbara-dhara*.

There is another, a third *Naṭāmbara*, who dances on the bull, his matted hair adorned with the crescent moon, wearing various ornaments and carrying the *paraśu*, *damaru*, *rudra-ghanṭā* (bell) in his hands to the left. His right hands carry a serpent-noose, a lance and a rosary, *akṣhamālā*. He shows the *dhyāna-mudrā* on the right side and the legs are extended in opposite directions. This is the most calm and peaceful dance of *Naṭāmbara*.

The *Śilpa Prakāśa* also lays down rules for preparing a *tāṇḍava yantra*, on which the *nṛitya mūrtis* are to be shown. It is believed that the dance image of Śiva increases bliss. This statement of the *Śilpa Prakāśa* seems to be enthusiastically followed, as almost all the Śiva temples of Orissa prefer to show the dancing figure on the top of the facade. *Naṭāmbara yantras* are based on this belief. There are elaborate texts on the preparation of *Naṭāmbara yantras*.

In the *yantra* also, it is the form of the figure which is incised, and the detailed description is given of each part as arranged against specific lines and compartments into which the rectangular *yantra* is divided.

It is *Naṭāmbara* No. 2 which is more popular than the rest. It is here that one of the hands is in *daṇḍa hasta*. The figure is very pleasing and is not emaciated and fearful, like *Naṭāmbara* No. 1. All the three figures are shown illustrated on page 18 of the *Śilpa Prakāśa*, where the Sanskrit text is given and the sculptural representation illustrated in plate 47.

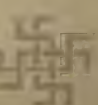
Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa

A Śilpa text, *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa*, by Sūtrapāta Maṇḍana, contemporary of Rāṇā Kumbha of Mewār in the 15th century, gives descriptions of various forms of deities. In this, the dancing form of Śiva, or of any other similar deities is not specifically described, but towards the end of the text itself, the mode of representing dancing figures is described in a general way, to apply to all dancing forms of deities. Towards the end of the eighth chapter of the text, after a description of all forms of Devī, the last few verses give a general direction for depicting dance figures. The face aslant in diverse angles, the hands and eyes moving gracefully in different directions, the dance

fingers, according to the definition of the science, should be so employed appropriately as to portray the sense of purpose, through *abhinaya* or gesticulation. Where the hand moves, the eyes do also, and the mind along with the eyes, and closely following the mind is the emotion, and where there is the emotion, there is the flavour. The mouth, or the throat, gives out the text of the song, and the hands explain its purport, the eyes conveying the emotion, as the feet determine the rhythm. In this science of sculpture, expounded by Viśvakarmā, in the *Āgamas*, like *Kāmika*, *Kāraṇa*, etc. in the *Purāṇas*, like *Matsya*, *Agni*, *Vishṇudharmottara* and others, and in the science of dance, expounded by Bharata, there are different sculptural forms enumerated; as it is not possible to have all of them repeated here, an epitomy has been given: *bhaṅge bhaṅge mukham kuryāddhastau dṛiṣṭim cha narttane hastakādyam bhavelloke karmaṇo'bhinayekhilam yato hastas tato dṛiṣṭir yato dṛiṣṭis tato manaḥ yato manas tato bhāvo yato bhāvas tato rasaḥ āsyenālabayed gītam hastenārtham prakalpayet chakshurbhīyam cha bhaved bhāvaḥ pādābhyam tālanirṇayaḥ śrīviśvakarmaṇas śāstre purāṇabharatāgame rūpasamkhyāpyanekāsti leśoyam likhitas tataḥ* (*Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa*, 8, 118-121).

It is clear from this that the sculptor, Maṇḍana, has given a general formula, but a very thorough one, for delineation of all dance forms. He has in mind a special dance form of Śiva as described in the *Matsyapurāṇa* and in the *Āgamas*, like *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* and others, where elaborate descriptions of the dance figure of Śiva exist. However, as the *Śilpa* text is from Rājasthān, there has been very much in the mind of the sculptor the dancing form of the *Saptamātrikās*, which was popular in this region. That is why he has specially mentioned the dancing form of Śiva, along with the *Mātrikās*, known as *Vīreśvara* or *Vīrabhadra*, who carries always the *viṇā* in his hand. He also calls him *Bhairava* and he distinguishes *Bhairava* and *Gaṇeśa* as the two deities flanking the *Mātrikās*. He describes their figures as dancing ones: *bhairavam kārayet tatra nṛityamānam vikāraṇam*. Though he places *Gaṇeśa* first and *Bhairava* last, it is clearly a confusion, because the almost identical text in *Rūpamaṇḍana* puts *Bhairava* first and *Vināyaka* last: *vīreśvaras tu bhagavān mātrīṇām agrato bhavet madhye cha mātrikā kār्या chānte teshām vināyakaḥ* (*Rūpamaṇḍana*, 5, 73).

In the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa*, the personified



form of *Nāṭyaśāstra* has been elaborately described, clearly following the definition of the earlier text, *Vishṇudharmottara*. This Śilpa text portrays the form of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, as white in complexion, beautiful, three-eyed, wearing *jaṭās* and carrying a rosary and trident. The epithet, *mṛigavaktra*, is to be understood as having the hand in *mṛigaśirsha*, as *mṛigaśirsha* is also a symbol of Śiva in dance. Since the *Vishṇudharmottara* is very clear about the form of Śiva representing *Nāṭyaśāstra* and, even in this text the form is described as three-eyed and beautiful and wearing *jaṭās*, it cannot be that it is anything but the face of Śiva. 'Mṛigavaktra', like the attributes 'akshasūtra' and 'triśūla', has clearly to go along with 'bibhrāṇam', meaning, holding the rosary, holding the trident and depicting the pose of the hand *mṛigaśirsha*: *nṛityaśāstram sitam ramyam mṛigavaktram jaṭādharam akshasūtram triśūlam cha bibhrāṇam tat trilochanam* (*Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* 4, 13).

It is also interesting to note Śiva's interest in dance, suggested in the direction given for the carving of Umāmaheśvara, where Bhṛīṅgiriṭi is to be represented always dancing on the seat for the deity. This is of common occurrence in many representations of Umāmaheśvara, including those from Nepal, where Śiva along with Devī, is a witness of dance, which he appreciates and eulogises as a great art. The personified form of *Nāṭya*, identified with Śiva himself as the *nāṭyamūrti*, is almost as much as to describe the *nāṭyamūrti* itself of Śiva: *bhṛīṅgiriṭam tathā kuryānniyamānnṛityasamsthitam* (*Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* 6, 32).

It is also very interesting that the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* ends with a prayer, possibly to dancing Devī. Probably it is only a feminine concept of Śiva dancing that is described here. The dancing group of Mātṛikās, and particularly dancing Devī, was such a favourite theme that this description, in a verse, which almost conceives of all the mothers together as one, is no wonder in an area, where invariably the Mātṛikās are usually shown dancing, rather than seated or standing. 'May that mother of the universe, Gaurī, whose immanent form is contemplated by Brahmā and other celestials, as the origin of the universe in all its manifold wondrous variety, and that in which all the hosts of gods and demons get merged at the end of the deluge and who is therefore adorable to all, grant all happiness': *yasyā no kalayanti rūpam akhilam brahmādayo devatā gauryā viśvam idam vichitrarachanāścharyam*

samutpadyate kalpāntāvasare surāsuragaṇo yasyām samāliyate tasmāt sā jagadambikākhilajagadvandya sukham yachchhatu (*Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* 8, 122).

Vishṇudharmottara

The *Vishṇudharmottara* has interesting description of some forms of Śiva, like Pināki, Vṛishabhārūḍha, Gaurīśvara and Bhairava. His five faces, suggesting Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusha and Īšana, the *umāvaktra* or the face of Umā, in his composite form, are all described. The significance of these forms, as given in their interpretation, is also equally interesting. But it may appear strange that the dance form of Śiva has not been included amongst these. However, it is quite significant that the *Vishṇudharmottara* identifies *Nāṭya* itself with Śiva, and in describing the personified form of *Nāṭya*, like similar representations of the *Vedas*, *Vedāṅgas*, *Dharmaśāstra* and *Purāṇa*, it is Śiva's form that is suggested. The representation of the personified *Rigveda* is the form of Brahmā himself. Similarly, *Yajurveda* is indicated by Indra, *Sāmaveda*, by Vishṇu, *Atharvaveda* by Śiva, *Śikshā* by Prajāpati, *Kalpa* again by Brahmā, *Vyākaraṇa* by Sarasvatī, *Nirukta* by Varuṇa, *Chhandas* by Agni, *Jyotisha* by Sūrya, *Mīmāṃsā* by Soma, *Nyāya* by Vāyu, *Dharmaśāstra* and *Purāṇa* by Manu, *Itihāsa* by Prajāpati, *Dhanurveda* again by Indra, *Āyurveda* by Dhanvantari, *Phalaveda* by Bhūdevī and *Nṛityaśāstra* by Maheśvara: *āyurvedas tathā sākshād devo dhanvantariḥ prabhuḥ phalavedo mahī devī nṛityaśāstram maheśvaraḥ* (*Vishṇudharmottara* 73, 47).

The *Vishṇudharmottara* is, however, perfectly aware of the dance form of Śiva and the special name, Nartēśvara, for this form as known in North India. In the chapter on the origin of dance, the *Vishṇudharmottara* narrates how the science of dance, created by Vishṇu, was transmuted through Brahmā to Rudra. Śaṅkara, the Lord who dances for good to the world, assures this prosperity through dance, and his dance pleases Vishṇu, whose charming movements, while approaching Madhu and Kaiṭabha, originated the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* and the science of dance itself. There is nothing more pleasing for Śiva than dance itself, and as he dances, he enjoys it, and blesses all those who worship him by an offering of their best through dance. The explanation given at length in the text is convincingly to establish the name Nartēśvara for the dance-form of Śiva: *tataḥ prabhṛiti deveśas śaṅkaras śaṅkaro nṛīṇām nṛītenārādhayannāste devam chakragadādharam*

nṛiṭṭeśvaratvam chāvāpa tushṭāva madhusūdanam so'pi tushyati nṛittena samyag āradhito haraḥ (Vishṇudharmottara 34, 22-23).

Matsyapurāṇa

The *dhyānaśloka*, describing the multi-armed form of Natarāja portrayed in North India, has not yet been found anywhere, except in the text of the *Matsyapurāṇa*. This description is very elaborate and clearly indicates the attributes, as well as the multiplicity of arms, and is as important as the texts of the *Vishṇudharmottara* and the *Agnipurāṇa*, that describe forms of deities which are essential for understanding the iconographic import of several images. In this text of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, Śiva is described as having rounded limbs of golden hue, fair of form and brilliantly dazzling, like the rays of the sun, with the crescent moon adorning the matted locks of hair, bound up crown-like, youthful as on the threshold of sixteen. The hands of Śiva are charming and comparable to the trunk of the elephant in their elegant tapering contour. His hair flows upwards, his beautiful eyes are large and long. Clad in a tiger skin and decked with anklets, armlets and different types of jewels, composed of snakes, he has a pair of ear-rings adorning his lobes. Beautiful and pleasant looking, he carries the shield, skull cap, snake and *khaṭvāṅga* in his hands to the left, while to the right, there are the sword, spear, club and trident. A hand of his is in *varada* and the other carries the *akṣamālā*. He is thus depicted ten-armed. Starting his movements from the main stance of *Vaiśākhaśthāna*, he dances and performs *abhinaya*. He also wears the elephant hide.

When he is depicted dancing, after the burning of the Tripuras, he should be shown with sixteen arms, with the attributes of conch, wheel, club, horn, bell, as additional ones. Here, as a special case, his bow should be *Pināka*, composed of Mt. Meru itself and the arrow Vishṇu himself. Śiva may have four hands or eight in his *jñāna* and *yoga* attitudes, as Yogeśvara and Jñāneśvara. His face, in the Bhairava aspect, is fearful: *ataḥ param pravakshyāmi rudrādyākāram uttamam sa pīnorubhujas-kandhas taptakāñchanasaprabhaḥ śuklo'rkaśmīsam-ghātas chandrāṅkitajaṭo vibhuḥ jaṭāmukutadhārī cha dvyashṭavarshākṛitī cha saḥ bāhū vāraṇaśtābhau vṛittajāṅghorumaṇḍalaḥ ūrdhvaśeśaḥ cha kartavyo dirghāyatavilochanaḥ vyāghracharmaparīdhānaḥ kaṭi-sūtratrāyānvitoḥ hārakeyūrasampanno bhujaṅgā-bharaṇas tathā bāhavas chāpi kartavyā nānābharaṇa-bhushitāḥ pīnorugaṇḍaphalakāḥ kuṇḍalābhyām alam-*

kṛitāḥ ājānūlambabāhuścha saumyamūrtis suśobhanaḥ khaṭakam vāmahaste tu khaḍgam chaiva tu dakṣiṇe śaktim daṇḍam trisūlam cha dakṣiṇeshu niveśayet kapālam vāmapārśve tu nāgam khaṭvāṅgam eva cha ekaścha varado hastas tathākshavalayo' paraḥ vaiśākham sthānakam kṛitvā nṛityābhinayasamsthitaḥ nṛityan daśabhujāḥ kāryo gajacharmadharas tathā tatra tripuradāhe cha bāhavas shoḍaśaiva tu śaṅkham chakram gadāśārṅgam ghaṇṭā tatrūdhikā bhavet tathā dhanuḥ pinākaścha śaro viṣṇumayas tathā chaturbhujāśṭabāhur va jñānayogeśvaro mataḥ tikṣhaṇāsā-gradaśanaḥ karālavadano mataḥ bhairavas śasyate loke pratyāyatanaśamsthitaḥ (*Matsyapurāṇa* 259, 3-14).

Dr. Bhattasali has specially quoted from the *Matsyapurāṇa* to elucidate the ten-armed form of dancing Śiva in the Dacca Museum and he has found that the attributes closely answer this description.

Kūrmapurāṇa

The *Kūrmapurāṇa* has valuable textual material to describe the glory of dancing Śiva. The *Śivagītā*, which is part of *Kūrmapurāṇa*, recounts the sportive dance of Śiva, as witnessed by sages. He is the protector of the righteous and chastises the wicked, liberator of the *yogis*, that fix their thought on him. Though himself free from bonds, he is the cause of bonds of attachment and cycles of life, his power is the veil of ignorance, that fools the world, though with his own power, known as the supreme knowledge (*vidyā*), he destroys ignorance, stationing himself in the hearts of *yogis*. He himself propels or reverses all forces (*śaktis*). Himself the basis of immortality, his immanent power creates the whole universe. He creates in the guise of Brahmā, as Nārāyaṇa the lord of the universe, he shapes the world, and destroys, in the guise of Rudra, the dark one. Those who meditate on him (*dhyāna*) comprehend him by supreme knowledge (*jñāna*), or by devotion (*bhaktiyoga*), or even by devotional acts (*karmayoga*). He loves most those who adore him by *jñāna*. All of them reach him and none is left out. In his immanence in the universe, he is both *pradhāna* and *puruṣa*, and the cause of all the activity in the world. Understanding this assures immortality. He is thus Yogeśvara, *yogī* and *mayī* as described in the texts, is the propeller of the universe, and, in the ecstasy of bliss, he dances. The *yogī* that realises this comprehends *yoga* (*yogavit*). This is the esoteric knowledge given in the *Vedas*, to be made available to the pure in heart, i.e. *dharma*-minded and worshippers of the sacred fire.



FIG. 4. Śiva dancing, 18th century A.D., Kangra, 18th century A.D., Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

He dances with Viṣṇu in the sky: *nanarta paramam bhāvam aiśvaram sampradarśayan tam te dadṛśur īśānam tejasām paramam nidhim nṛityamānam mahādevam viṣṇunā gagane'male* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 1-3).

The concept of Śiva and Nārāyaṇa as one, even as Śiva dances in the sky, is indeed most interesting and in the description of the *Śivagītā*, the two deities are brought together: *kṣaṇena jagato yonim nārāyaṇam anāmayam īśvareṇaikyam āpannam apaśyan brahmavādinah* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 16); *dṛṣṭvātha rudram jagadīśitāram tam padmonābhāṣṛitavāmbhāgam* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 19).

Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanat-kumāra and others are mentioned, as witnessing his dance: *kṛtārtham menire santah.... sanatkumāras sanako bhṛīṅgis cha sanātanas chaiva sanandanas cha* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 17).

This description of Śiva's dance, witnessed by Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanat-kumāra and other sages, is clearly answered in the elaborate representation in paintings in

Kerala. The dance of Śiva in the sky, famous in Chidambaram, and the dance of bliss, *ānandatāṇḍava*, is also clear in the lines: *paśyāmas tvām paramākāśamadye nṛityantam te mahimānam smarāmaḥ sarvātmānam bahudhā sannivishṭam brahmānandam chānubhūyānubhūya* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 27).

That he dances in the heart is also very clearly stated here: *paśyāmas tvām jagato hetu-bhūtam nṛityantam sve hṛidaye sannivishṭam* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 25).

Śiva as the Māyāvi, who creates and overcomes Māyā, is also described: *vandyam tvām ye śaraṇam samprapannā māyām etām te tarantiha viprāḥ* (Kūrmapurāṇa, Part 2, 5, 32).

Chaturvargachintāmaṇi

This encyclopaedic book on *Dharmaśāstra* has valuable iconographic material, codified in the *Vratākhaṇḍa* by Hemādri, who was patronised by the Yādava monarch Rāmachandra. There is a long list of various deities and their iconographic details. It is a wonder that,

though Hemādri has described Ardhanārīśvara and other forms of Śiva, he has not mentioned the Naṭarāja aspect. This does not mean that he is not aware of the form of Naṭarāja. In fact, he quotes from the *Vishnudharmottara* to describe *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself, as of the form of Śiva. The verse, *āyurvedas tathā sākshād devo dhanvantariḥ prabhuḥ vanavedam mahī devī nṛityaśāstram mahēśvaraḥ* (*Chaturvargachintāmaṇi, Vratākhaṇḍa*, p. 108), given by him from the *Vishnudharmottara* shows how conversant he was with all the iconographic material in that text. In fact, he is acquainted with the material from all the *Purāṇas*. In describing *Nṛityaśāstra*, as portrayed in the *Viśvakarma Śāstra*, he quotes another verse, which gives the personified figure of Dance as fair in colour, beautiful, three-eyed, with the face of the deer, wearing *jaṭās*, holding the rosary and trident: *nṛityaśāstram sitam ramyam mṛigavaktram jaṭādharam akṣhasūtram triśūlam cha bibhrāṇaṇcha trilochanam* (*Chaturvargachintāmaṇi, Vratākhaṇḍa*, p. 107).

It is rather difficult, though not impossible, to interpret *mṛigavaktra* as the hand in *mṛigavaktra* or *mṛigaśirsha*, though, in the case of other subjects, like *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Itihāsa*, etc., it is the face of a bird or an animal that is suggested. The face of the deer for *Nāṭyaśāstra* is probably because *mṛigaśirshahasta*, suggesting the face of the deer, is the symbol of Śiva, the highest of ascetics, *avishayamanasām yaḥ parastād yatīnam*, as later it became a symbol of Buddha and even of the Jina Śāntinātha, where the innocent animal is made an emblem of peace and sacrifice.

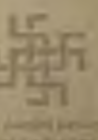
Stotra

In a hymn known as *Śivagaurīstotra*, there is a peculiar representation of Śiva as a dancer, for which there is no text anywhere. Śiva

standing before Devī, as a beggar, is described dancing, the primaeval dance with leg bent and raised a little, and holding up snake, moon and fire, dancing in supreme glee, at the sight of Devī offering food, indeed a picture for which no representation in art has yet been discovered. Gaurī offering food and appreciating Śiva's dance is the theme of another, where Devī is described as red in hue, dressed in a patterned garment, crescent moon-crested, slightly bent by the weight of the breasts, the mother who destroyed the painful chain of births and deaths, the godly damsel joyously welcoming the dancing lord, bejewelled on the crest by the crescent moon: *raktām vichitra-vasanām navachandrachūḍām annapradānaniratām stanabhāranamrām nṛityantam induśakalābhharāṇam vilokya hṛishṭām bhaje bhagavatīm bhavaduḥkha-hantrīm; udañchitākuñchitavāmapādam samañchitā-hīndukriśānuhastām annapradām vīkshya mudā mahēśīm naṭantam ādyam naṭam āśrayāmaḥ* (*Śivagaurīstotra* 7-8).

It is most interesting to note that the concept of Śiva dancing is present in the *Sivamahāpurāṇa*. Śiva as a dancer appears before Menā. It is further noteworthy that he is described as having a single pair of arms and carries a horn and drum. This is exactly the picture of Śiva as we have him in Pahārī paintings (Fig. 4). It is undoubtedly the concept of Śiva before Annapūrṇā, but as a dancer: *etasminnantare śambhus sulilo bhaktavatsalas sunartakanaṭo bhūtvā menāyā sannidhim yayau śṛṅgam vāme kare dhṛitvā dakṣiṇe ḍamarum tathā prishṭhe kaṇṭham raktavāsā nṛitya-gānaviśāradaḥ* (*Śivamahāpurāṇa* 3, 34, 17-18).

It is thus seen that concepts of Śiva are derived, not only from the *Āgamās* and *Silpaśāstras*, but also from the *Purāṇas*, *Dharmaśāstra* and *Stotras*.



AESTHETIC QUALITY OF THE CONCEPT

The Indian *śilpi*, who conceived and fashioned the form of Natarāja, has undoubtedly created the greatest masterpiece of Indian art. Natarāja almost sums up the perfection of aesthetic appreciation in India. Appaya Dikshita, in explaining the charm of an unfinished work of his, assures the reader that its charm, even in its unfinished state, would gladden litterateurs, like the half-moon on Śiva's crest, which even so is inviting: *apyardhachitramāmāmsā na mude kasya māmsalā anūrur iva għarmāmśor ardhendur iva dhūrjaṭeḥ* (*Chitramāmāmsā*).



FIG. 1. The crescent moon on Śiva's head, an aphorism of beauty.

The crescent moon on Śiva's head is, as it were, an aphorism of beauty. An arc well drawn is a charm in art. The contour of the face, the outline of the youthful breast, the curvature of the ample hip, the line of the coiffure for braided hair, dressed up as a circular mass, the lines on the neck gracefully curling, like the spiral on the conch, after which the beauty of the neck itself is described as *kambukaṇṭha*, the curls of the hair suggesting myriads of crescents, are only implied expressions of the charm of the curve in art. Even jocularly the sweetheart is called *kuṭilā*, or the curved one, by the lover. A straight line is bald; the curve suggests beauty. It is no wonder that the crescent moon has been prominently shown on the crest of dancing Śiva, as a symbol of beauty (Fig. 1).



FIG. 2. Wavy line or jalataraṅga of the locks of Śiva floating out in dance.

The wavy line is another charming manipulation of the artist. *Taraṅga*, or wave with its curvature, flowing in and out, creates a sequence of undulations that not only suggest beauty, but also scintillating life. It should be remembered that beauty cannot be indolent, beauty must be dynamic. The waves never go singly. They are in quick succession and create a series of charming rolling curves. Similarly the curly hair, in *taraṅga* fashion. It is this that is suggested in the *jaṭās* of Śiva, that whirl all around and themselves undulate in wavy pattern (Fig. 2). One cannot but recall the magnificent description of Ruskin, about the charm of flowing streams, running fast in eddy and whirlpool, changing the course, if necessary, to create serpentine trends in their flow, thereby adding charm.

The peacock feather on the *jaṭā* of Śiva, in his Natarāja form, has its own special charm (Fig. 3). It has not only an iconographic significance, as it is a subtle combination of *kirāta* with *Nāṭanamūrti*, but is also in itself a charming decoration, in terms of its colour and artistic shape. The beautiful form of the cowherd boy, Kṛishṇa, is further enhanced in charm by the addition of the peacock feather, a plume more beautiful than the most exquisitely wrought ornament: *barheṇeva sphuritaruchinā gopaveshasya viśṇoḥ* (*Meghadūta*).

One cannot forget the tremendous impression that the peacock room produces in the

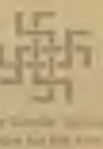




FIG. 3. Peacock feathers adorning jaṭās of Śiva: suggestion of the hunter kirāta in Kirātamūrti.

Freer Art Gallery in Washington. It is not without reason that the peacock is considered the most artistic bird in God's creation; a single plume enhances the charm of anything associated with it.

The snake by itself may be a dreaded object, but it cannot be gainsaid that its curvature is most pleasing. Śiva, almost as a *śilpāchārya*, as a master of all aesthetic concepts, has the snake on different limbs in different patterns of curls. The wavy line of the *jaṭā* is wonderfully



FIG. 4. Undulating snake adorning wavy jaṭās of Śiva.

matched by the undulating form of the snake, which is called *bhujāṅga*, just because of this characteristic, the zig-zag course in which it moves.

There cannot be a better demonstration of the artistic excellence of Śiva's style of wearing his hair, with the snake as the binding medium: *bhujāṅgamonnaddhajaṭākālāpam* (*Kumārasambhava*), especially in its form in the *jaṭābhāra* fashion, as in the famous bronze Vṛishabhavāhanamūrti from Tiruveṅkāḍu, now in the Tañjāvūr Art Gallery. In its shape and elegance it is almost as it were a basket full of excellence, exceedingly pleasing in the arrangement of the blend of *jaṭās*, with the curls of the snakes entwined with them (Fig. 4).



FIG. 5. Gaṅgā, charming mermaid, settled on jaṭās as contrast to the grinning skull.

Art is not just the representation of the beauty and excellence of form. Beauty itself is best perceived against a contrast. The hideous, faithfully represented in art, enhances the value of loveliness. The grinning skull, with deep sunken sockets for eyes that are no more, has a telling effect in close proximity to the face of Gaṅgā, charmingly presented as a mermaid on the locks (Fig. 5).

The *Dhattūra* flower, stuck in the skull, with its long slender petals, is an indication of the charm of flowers as a decoration for the hair. *Kusumāśekhara*, as Bāṇa would describe the decoration of the hair with flowers, was considered an item of aesthetic taste in a *Nāgaraka*. Śiva, the Lord of all arts, is the greatest *Nāgaraka*, and surely cannot be represented, except



FIG. 6. Kusumāśekhara of Śiva, the jaṭās adorned with aṣṭapushpikā, dhuttūra prominent, a garland of flowers trailing charmingly on jaṭās.

with *kusumāśekhara*; and this is a sort of epitome of the *aṣṭapushpikā*, associated with Śiva, making the arrangement of his jaṭās so charming (Fig. 6).

In the arrangement of the hair itself, the sculptor has ever made it an important point not to loosen the entire bundle of locks, to swirl all around, nor does he make the whole thing a dressed up jaṭā in *makūṭa* fashion, as normally seen in all other forms, except that

of Naṭeśa. A portion of the jaṭās is skillfully arranged as a *makūṭa*, while the rest are allowed loose to hang on the shoulder or on the back or to fly about on either side laterally, almost creating an impression of a wavy background. It is as much, in the words of a poet, in another context, a fluttering silken flag of the stream of the heavenly river. Here it is only the jaṭās that give this impression.

It is not merely the swirl of the jaṭās, on either side high up, but, as the dance commences, also undoubtedly to indicate that the tempo is not picked up, the jaṭās are purposely shown on the back and on the shoulders of Naṭarāja by the metal sculptor. It is most interesting to see the different ways in which the movement of jaṭās and dance is artistically indicated. In such a case, the back view of the dancing Śiva in metal helps to a better understanding of the aesthetic appreciation of the sculptor, who fashioned this element of beauty in Śiva's form. The famous Naṭarāja from Melaperumpallam is an excellent example of the commencement of Śiva's dance, where the jaṭās have not yet sprung up to swirl sideways, indicating violent movement, necessitating corresponding movement of the head (Fig. 7). The arrangement of the swirling jaṭā is in itself an expression of artistic ecstasy. Śiva's head,

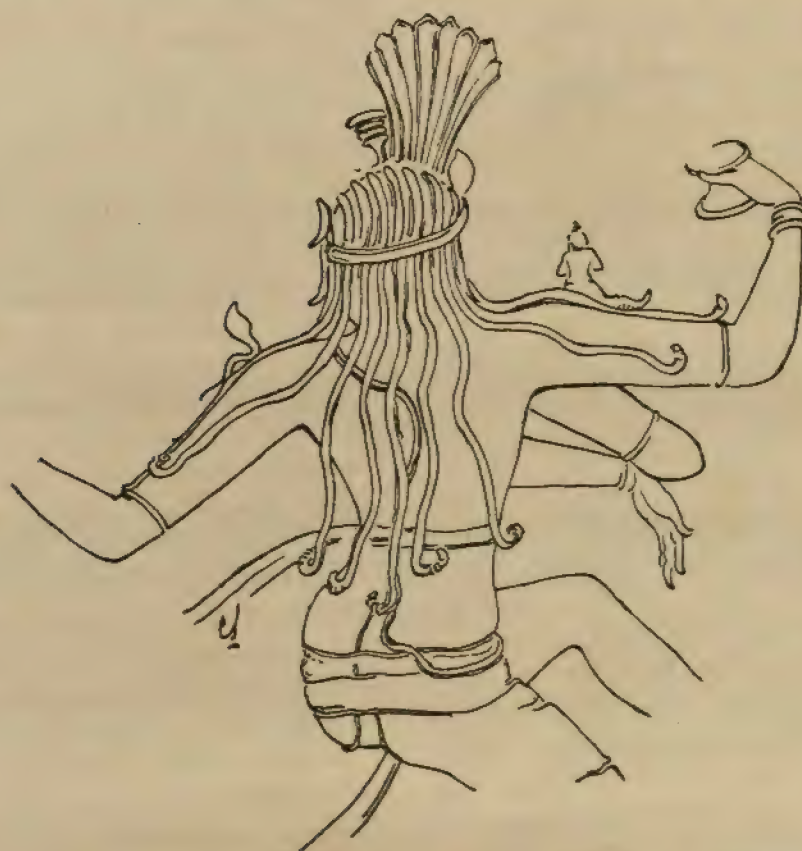


FIG. 7. Jaṭās hanging loose also in wavy fashion on the back and shoulders at the commencement of dance before whirling on high.



FIG. 8. Swirling locks, a network of long wavy lines, with flowers set at intervals between them, creating a chequered pattern of network, and the fluttering uttariya from the udarabandha of Śiva.

touching the sky, with the *jaṭās* themselves brushing the stars, as sometimes the poet has fancied, is so full of *Mandāra*, *Pārijāta*, *Mallī* and other flowers, that moistened by the drops of the Ganges, and added to by the lotus from the stream, scatters them as they fall and get entangled in between the swirling locks, forming, as it were, a network of long wavy lines, and flowers at intervals between them, creating a chequered pattern. This is one of the most beautiful creations of the South Indian metal craftsman, who perfected the Naṭarāja image in the Chōḷa period (Fig. 8). The terminals of *jaṭās* are sometimes linked up with flowers, sideways, on top, on either side, making this pattern even more elaborate, but this is a sure sign of the later phase of the Chōḷa period.

Repetition is insipid and avoided. Apart from the expressive significance of Ardhanārīśvara in the variation of the decoration of the lobes, there is aesthetic charm as well. The representation of one pattern of *kuṇḍala*, the *patra*, i.e. the twisted golden palm leaf on the left ear-lobe, while the other remains free, or, the decoration of one with the *makara*, representing the crocodile design, with a total absence of the ornament on the other ear, or even any deviation in pattern of the ornament presented on both lobes, as the case may be, has its own singular artistic charm.

The moon, normally represented touching the *jaṭā* on the *mukuta* part of it, in other forms of Śiva, is, however, in the Naṭarāja form, shown resting on and towards the terminal of one of the many swirling *jaṭās*. This is again a pattern of artistic taste, in the creator of the Naṭarāja image.

A medieval inscription, the Mīhara plate of Damodaradeva, has an interesting eulogy of the lunar adornment of Śiva's *jaṭās*, drawing attention to its aesthetic quality. The crest moon of Śiva is not only the weapon of Cupid, the conqueror of the three worlds, in his great adventure, but also the only aesthetic object for the fawn-eyed damsels to settle their eyes on: *tribhubanajayinas smarasya śaṣṭram harīṇa-dṛśām lalīṭaika-dṛśīpātram sakalasuraguroḥ śirovatamso jagatī tanotu sudhām asau sudhāmśuḥ* (Epigraph. Ind. 27, p. 187).

The eye on the forehead of Śiva, by which he is known as Triambaka or Virūpāksha, is again a pattern of artistic beauty. The eye along the forehead is anything but beautiful. This is most occasional in representations of Śiva, and is almost confined to a few examples in the Kushāṇa period. But it persists, even in the medieval period, as a characteristic of Indra. It was almost a lampoon to make Indra possess this type of eye on his forehead and



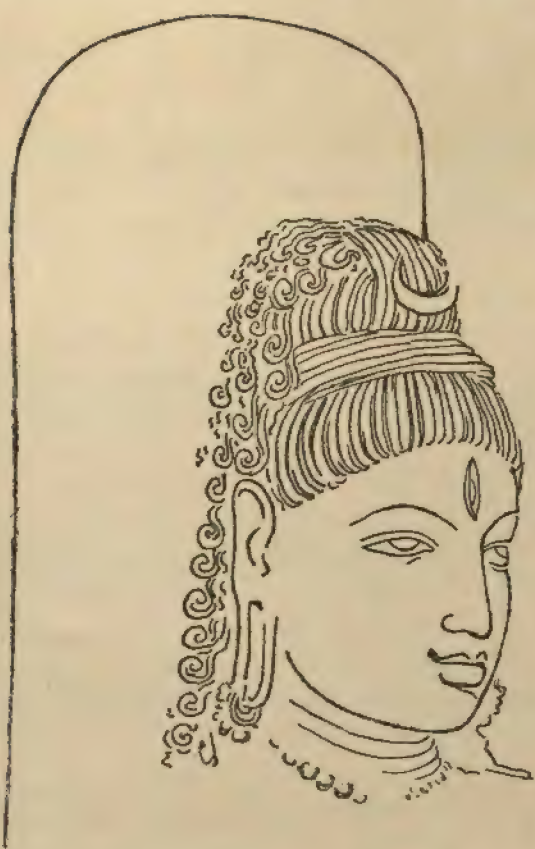


FIG. 9. The eye on the forehead of Śiva making him the opposite of Virūpākṣa beautiful to look at. The best example of the Gupta period.

many more on his other limbs. But Śiva, who even with his three eyes, is ever for the prosperity of the world, and who creates rather than destroys with his third eye, as pointed out by Ratnākara and other poets, who is the very essence of *maṅgala* or auspiciousness, cannot be represented, except with an artistic pattern on his forehead as the third eye. So, in the most perfect form of Śiva in Gupta and Vākāṭaka sculpture, the eye is more like a *tilaka* on the forehead, against the forehead and not along it; and this adds charm rather than detracts from the beauty of his face (Fig. 9, 10).

Śiva's dance stances, in different aspects of *tāṇḍava*, are again fine examples of the aesthetic concept and finish by the sculptor. We can take each individual stance.

The *bhujāṅga* mode, which is generally entitled the *ānandatāṇḍava* pose of Nāṭarāja, has the left leg raised and bent, while the weight of the body is on the right leg. The bend in the case of both the legs is so artistic, and the two are so balanced, that with the *daṇḍahasta*, which points to the raised foot, the two hands slightly spread out, carrying the drum and the fire, and the hand in *abhaya* make it an exquisite composition, with every limb balanced to go very well with the others, and the body itself,

the torso as well as the head, the head with the slight tilt suggesting a majestic look at the audience, makes it indeed a perfect sculptural creation. The *hastas*, also, are so arranged that they form an artistic group. The *abhaya hasta*, which is almost a *paṭāka*, the *daṇḍahasta*, with the hand hanging free in artistic fashion pointing to the foot, with the pointing finger slightly away from the rest and delineated with great taste, the right upper hand in *kaṭakāmukha*, to carry the drum, and the corresponding left hand in *ardha-chandra*, to hold the flame, are all again a concept of charm.

When the leg is lifted up in *ūrdhvajānu*, there is again a special artistic re-arrangement of the limbs, to make the pose attractive.

In the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, the leg shot up at once suggests great masculinity; it is at once artistic and majestic. It gives something that only Śiva could do and never Devī out of modesty in her dance. The throwing up of the leg in *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* is unexcelled in the metallic representation at Tiruvāṅgāḍu. A large number of arms, both here for this, and in the case of the Nāṭarāja from Nallūr, of the Pallava period, give greater freedom for the sculptor to manipulate charmingly the position of the arms in



FIG. 10. *Ardhanārīśvara* bust with the eye on the forehead beautiful as a *tilaka* mark. Note also *jaṭās* to right and braid to left and earring on left lobe and right lobe free. Gupta, 4th century A.D., Mathurā Museum.

order to make the whole composition a very artistic one.

With four arms, and with not even a leg lifted from the ground in the *chatura tāṇḍava*, Śiva is delineated in the greatest masterpiece of the early Chola period by the sculptor of the famous Tiruvaraṅgulam image. Here the position of the legs, with one of them slightly lifted up, but not quite off the ground, with only the heel raised, the foot resting on the toes, and with just a slight deviation in the position of both the legs, makes it exceedingly charming. With four arms arranged as usual, and with all the charm concentrated on the slight bend forward of the torso, the light tilt of the head and the arrangement of the legs, it forms a rare artistic concept.

The reversing of the legs would give the *lalita* pose, which is equally attractive. As the arrangement of the limbs, the posture is not very different, except for the reversing of the position of the feet, this is as charming as the other.

In the *ālīḍhanṛtta* of Śiva, the position of the legs and the artistic arrangement of the hands, which are shown multiplied, and yet managed with great taste in their arrangement, is indeed a fine example of another important aspect of Śiva's dance.

The classical book on the principles of art in India holds that one who delineates waves, flames, smoke, banners and clouds, according to the movement of the wind, is a great painter: *taraṅgāgniśikhādhūmam vaijayantyambarādikam vā-yugatyā likhed yas tu vijñeyas sa tu chitravit* (*Vishṇu-dharmottara*, 43.28). There is another very interesting remark in the same chapter: what has not been discussed in the chapter on painting, has to be understood from dance, and whatever has been omitted in the chapter on dance, should be understood through *chitra*. This close interrelation between *chitra* (sculpture and painting) and dance makes it essential to infuse life into a picture by making it dance, as it were. That is why the flame in Śiva's hand is not just a straight line, it is shown in violent dance, or in gentle movement of *lāśya*, known as *sulū* (Fig. 11). *Sulū* is defined as the gentle movement of the body, like the lamp flame lightly stirred by a soft breeze: *mandānalachaladdīpaśikhevāṅgasya chālanam sulūśabdena tatvajñair naṭais tat pratipādyate*, quoted from *Samgītadarpaṇa* in *Bharatārṇava*, explaining *sulū*

in *lalita aṅgahāra*, number 1 (*Bharatārṇava*, p. 292).

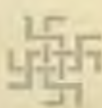
The delineation of the circle of flame all around Śiva, in the *bhāmaṇḍala* is similarly the most artistic arrangement. The flying ends of the *udarabandha*, that almost touch the circle of flame as they flutter, announcing the tempo of the dance movements, is yet another artistic indication of the sculptor's capacity to use a wonderful medium of movement like the flame, the banner. Here are the fringes of the garment fluttering in the wind, and similar is the movement of the *hāras* and the *kaṭisūtras* as he dances, all of which are represented in the most artistic fashion. The swirling *jaṭās* are also a similar expression. The wavy line of the flame, the wavy line of the water, similar movements of the garments, suggestive of air, are all an expression, not only of the elements composing the Lord, as he is himself the source of the *pañchabhūtas*, but also an artistic expression of the charm of Agni, Vāyu, Jala and Ākāśa, portrayed in their visual forms (*pratyak-shābhis tanubhiḥ*).



FIG. 11. Dancing flames springing up from the ardhachandra hasta of Śiva.

One cannot help recalling, in this context, a quotation from Coomaraswamy by Eliade, commenting on the Sanskrit word *līlā*, meaning 'play' and associated with 'lelay' to sparkle, the dance of flame. 'Coomaraswamy associates the Sanskrit word *līlā*—meaning 'play', especially cosmic play—with the root lelay, 'to flame', 'to sparkle', 'to shine'. This word lelay may convey a notion of 'fire, light or spirit' (The Two and the One, p. 36). He points out how there is a relationship between cosmic creation, conceived as a divine game, and the play of flames, the dance of well-fed fire. It connotes cosmic creation. It is this 'play', that

is observed as the most aesthetic element of undulations in the flame. It is the same lelay or the play in the ripples of the water and the curved contours of the clouds, moving in stately 'play' over the sky, and the movement of the wind, creating eddies in the atmosphere, which is also a lelay. It is this lelay that contributes to the aesthetic quality of the elements, and significantly it is this dynamic force, that creates also the cosmic connotation of the elements themselves. Through this aesthetic motion in Naṭarāja, all these forces have their full play and it is thus a great concept of supreme aesthetic quality.



NATARAJA FORM IN SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

Early Śiva Forms

Though the concept of the dance of Śiva is very old, the representations of Śiva's dance multiply only in the medieval period. Even in the Gupta period, they are very few. The paucity of early iconographic material should account for the absence of sculptures representing this form in a period earlier than Gupta. The *Bṛh̥tā Śivaliṅga* gives us the five heads of Śiva, suggesting, as early as in the Śuṅga period, a representation of Sadāśiva, with the faces connoting Tatpurusha, Īśāna, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyojāta. The combination of Agnirudra and, to an extent, the *Aṣṭamūrti* concept is suggested in the Śiva on the Guḍimallam *liṅga*, which is a contemporary sculpture from the south (Fig. 1). Thus it should not be totally denied that other similar sculptures of iconographic importance might have existed. It can be said, at best, that they are yet to be found.

Many Śiva temples, that existed in ancient India, are suggested in their forms represented on early coins, like the copper ones of the Audumbaras, like Śivadāsa, Rudradāsa and Dharaghosha. The shrines, called 'domed pavilion' by Coomaraswamy, with the trident—battle axe, emblem opposite them, as almost a *dhvajastambha* to indicate the deity of the temple, are very significant. They prove the existence of early religious monuments of wood which are now lost. The central figures in their *garbhagriha*, also of perishable material like wood, should have been lost. Śiva as *ushnīṣhī*, wearing a turban like all deities in the earliest phase of Indian iconography, is represented carrying trident—battle axe on a Kuṇḍa coin. He is similarly depicted on some gold coins of Wema Kadphises, with a trident—axe in his right hand and the tiger skin resting on his left arm.

The most interesting coins representing Śiva, however, are those of Maues and Gondophares, where he powerfully strides carrying the club—the *khaṭvāṅga* of Śiva. It is the warrior's stride in *ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha*. The upper garment, tied as the *udarabandha* in later figures of the

medieval period, that flutters as he dances, is also seen here fluttering and suggesting his speedy movement. As the figure of Śiva, with the elephant goad as an attribute, trampling a dwarfish figure, is already known on coins of Maues, it is interesting to compare this with the bronze seal, number 12, unearthed at Sirkap, Taxila, to which Banerjea has drawn attention in his book on Development of Hindu Iconography (pp. 119-121), and, rightly, as Śiva trampling Apasmāra *puruṣa*. The presence of the bull is doubly significant. One of his legs raised as in *ūrdhvajānu*, the attitude of the dwarfish figure at the foot, are all especially important to understand this as a very early precursor of the Śiva Natarāja theme, perfected in Gupta and medieval sculpture (Fig. 2).

Another significant early iconographic representation of Śiva dancing is a circular copper seal, discovered at Sirkap in the year 1914-15, where Śiva is shown with the club, which is to be equated with the *khaṭvāṅga* and the *triśūla*, trident. The legend is *śivarakṣita*, on either side, in both Brāhmī and Kharoshthī letters of the first century B.C., A.D. As it is a very early one, Śiva is *ushnīṣhī* and has a single pair of arms. He is in the *ālīḍha* pose. When we remember that Śiva danced, proclaiming victory as a hero, this stance of Śiva in the warrior's attitude is perfectly intelligible. Though it is an example of Hellenistic treatment, the theme is completely Indian in spirit and provides an early example of Śiva in consonance with his *tāṇḍava* dance (Fig. 3).

This dance form of Śiva has to be understood in the context of a still earlier terracotta figurine of the Śuṅga period, representing the musical form Viṇādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti, now in the Gopi Krishna Kanoria collection. It is a unique figure, representing Śiva as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, presiding over *Gāndharvaveda*, which includes music and dance (Fig. 4). As the Bhārhut sculpture representing the *nāṭya* of Apsarases, like Mīśrakeśī in the Vaijayanta *prāsāda* of Indra very clearly shows the highly developed technique of Bharata's *nāṭya*, the representation of this aspect of Śiva as the lord of music and

dance, at so early a date, in this singularly important terracotta, need not amaze us. It is only the paucity of discovered plastic material that could create this wonder. Otherwise, literary references to dance and the master of dance, Śiva, in his musical and dance attitude, only encourage us in the hope of discovery of

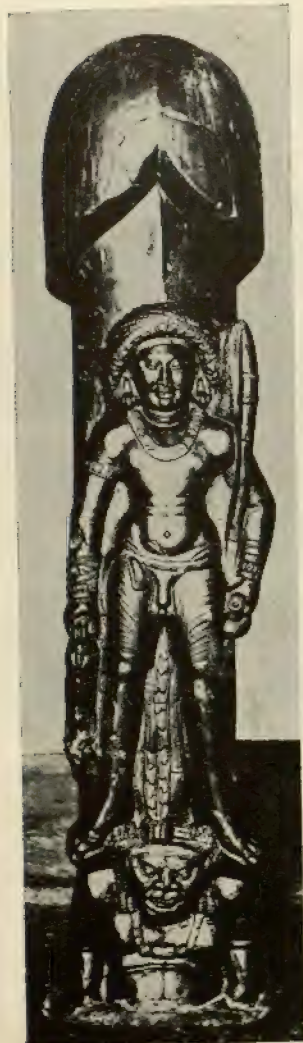


FIG. 1. Śiva as Agnirudra and yajamāna against Śivaliṅga shown as uṣṇiṣhin trampling Apasmāra, Sātavāhana, 2nd century B.C., Gudimalam, Chittor Distt. A.P.

FIG. 2. Śiva carrying khatvāṅga and striding in pratyālīdha pose, trampling Apasmāra, on coin of Maues, Indo-Greek, 1st century B.C.

FIG. 3. Copper seal showing Śiva carrying club, khatvāṅga combined with trisūla, striding in warrior pose, ālīdha, legend in Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī. Brāhmī legend Śivarakṣita, Indo-Greek, 1st century B.C. Taxila.



FIG. 4. Viṇādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti seated on a bull (Himālaya) with Gaṇas below, carrying harp-shaped viṇā in his hand. Śuṅga, 2nd century B.C. Terracotta from the collection of Gopi Krishna Kanoria.

several more such examples. Though the *Garuḍadvhaja* of Viṣṇu of Besnagar is mentioned in an early inscription, the actual crest of the banner has not so far been discovered. It is not known what surprises, as discoveries, are in store in the forthcoming years, as excavations on historical sites are sure to yield more art material. The early representations, cited above, leave us in no doubt about the antiquity of the musical and dance form of Śiva in plastic art.

Gupta

One of the early representations of Śiva in *tāṇḍava* dance is from Bhūmāra. It is a small broken figure representing the deity, ten-armed, dancing in a medallion in a *chaitya* window. Śiva here wears the *jaṭābhāra*. How a tradition like this is continued, may be observed in a dancing figure from the far south, in peninsular India, where in an early Pāṇḍyan cave of the 8th-9th century A.D., this trait of *jaṭābhāra* for Naṭarāja is portrayed.



FIG. 5. *Naṭarāja dancing, the finest of its kind, though fragmented. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Nāchnā collection of Mrs. Pupul Jayakar.*

The other sculpture, which is larger in size and more perfect in delineation, is the fragment representing the upper part of the body of dancing Śiva, now in the possession of Mrs. Pupul Jayakar (Fig. 5). It is an early Gupta piece from Nāchnā, of remarkable elegance, clearly portraying the *jaṭās* of the supreme dancer, tied up partially and partly dangling on his shoulders. The *karihasta* is very clearly seen. The northern feature of *bhujataruvana*, mentioned in the context of the dancing Śiva at Ujjain by Kālidāsa, is invariably found in all these representations. Even the fragment from Bhumāra very clearly presents this feature.

Another interesting Gupta sculpture, showing Śiva as a dwarf dancing, is from Nāchnā. Śiva is here one of the five principal forms, Aghora, Vāmadeva, Sadyojāta, Tatpurusha and Īśāna. Here it is Vāmadeva, as a dwarf dancing, with his right leg raised, left hand in *abhaya* and right hand in *karihasta*. He is four armed and his *jaṭā* is arranged in a cluster of small ringlets, all turned to the right, a favourite hair arrangement in the Gupta period. Here Śiva, as Pramathādhīpa, the Lord of the Pramathagaṇas, assumes the role of a

Gaṇa himself and dances like one of the several dwarf Gaṇas. There is an expression of mirth on his face. This almost suggests *bhujāṅga-trāsita*, the reversed form of the normal Naṭarāja figure in medieval sculpture from the south, and a special mode associated with the silver dance hall at Madurai, of which the most lovely representation is the bronze from Poruppumet-ṭupaṭṭi.

The doorlintel of the Gupta temple from Sakor (Fig. 6) shows Śiva, ten-armed, dancing, with his feet crossed in *svastika*. This is a prominent panel in the centre of the lintel, and announces the temple as of Śiva, with emphasis on his Naṭarāja aspect. Pramathagaṇas around him are shown witnessing his dance enthusiastically.

It is interesting to compare with this the carving of Śiva as the musical master, seated with Pārvatī and attended by Vidyādhara, represented as the central theme of the door lintel of the Gupta temple at Nāchnā. Whether as Viṇādhara, or as Naṭarāja, he is the master of *Gāndharvavidyā*, the great exponent of music and dance, given special prominence (Fig. 7).

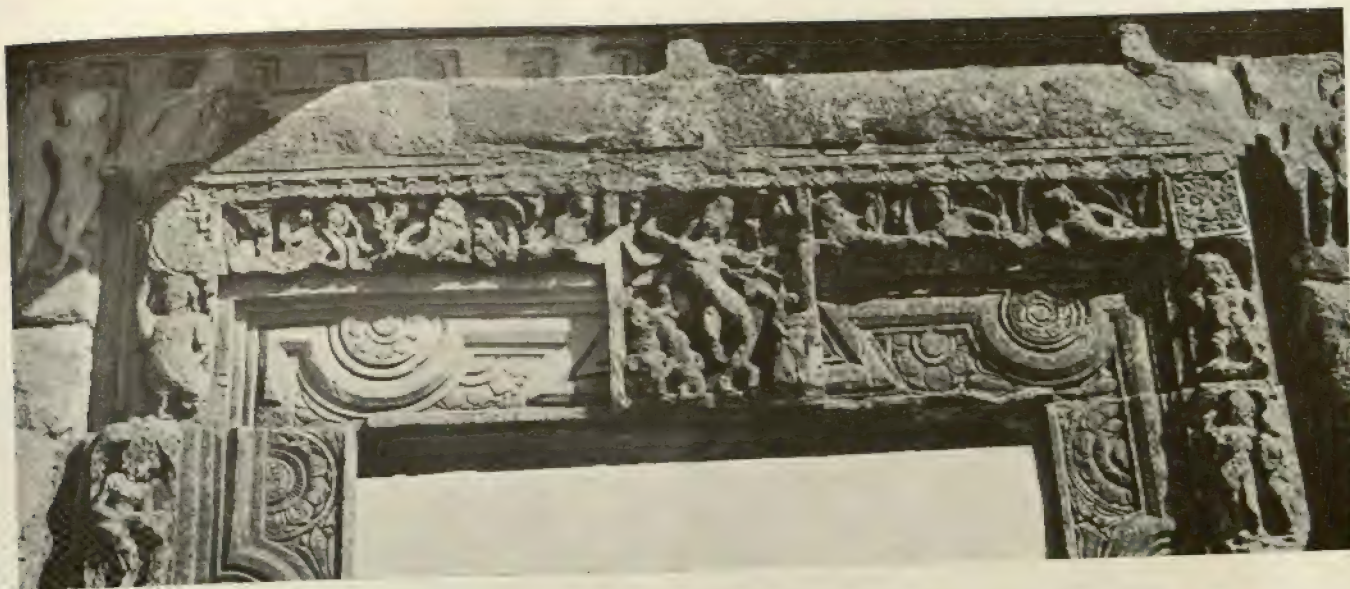


FIG. 6. Multi-armed Śiva dancing as the central figure of door lintel. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Sakore, M.P.

The musical taste, derived from Śiva by the Pramathagaṇas themselves, is apparent in almost every figure at Nāchnā. There is a whole series of Gaṇas playing the flute, lute or cymbals and dancing in various *karṇas*. Śiva as the great *śailūsha*, or *naṭa*, is almost suggested in the numerous actors on the stage, like the clownish figure, with the crooked staff of Vidūshka, represented in the terminal panel of the door lintel.

A Vidyādhara pair, handling the *vīṇā* and cymbals, seated as if for the musical orchestra, almost serves as a key-note of the atmosphere

of music and dance. To understand the Vāmadeva aspect of Śiva, the *chaturmukhalinga* from Nāchnā is a great aid. The faces representing the different aspects of Śiva are most interesting. Every little detail differs from face to face, starting with the calm and serene one, and ending in the terrific Bhairava form, with the mouth wide agape.

All the grace and beauty of Gupta sculpture is seen in a late example of this school, from Sirpūr, Śiva dancing in *lalita*, eight-armed. He has a large pearl necklace, *jaṭās* arranged as usual in Gupta sculpture, with the crescent



FIG. 7. Śiva as Vidyādhara as central figure on door lintel. Gupta, 5th century A.D., Nāchnā.



FIG. 8. Śiva on Vidyādhara from Mātrikā group. Vākāṇaka, 5th century A.D., Ellora.



FIG. 9. Multi-armed Śiva dancing, Gupta, 5th century A.D., Sirpur.

against it; the *ūrdhvaliṅga* recalls at once the tradition prevalent in this area of Central India, as at Mandasor. While the topmost pair of hands holds up the snake, the other arms carry the *śūla*, *damaru*, *kapāla*, while the last one fondles Devī, by caressing her chin. While the main right hand is in *gajahasta*, the main left, which should have been in *abhaya* or *saṁdamśa* brought nearer the ear, is broken. A drummer to the right plays the *ūrdhva* drum, while another beside him claps his hand to keep time. Gaṇeśa enjoys the dance, standing to Śiva's right, while Skanda, in juvenile fashion, dances exactly like his father, even while seated on the peacock. His left hand is in *gajahasta* and the right in *patāka*. Devī, seated to the left, watches her husband's dance with affection and emotion, and receives the caressing with joy. Between his legs peeps out a figure, dancing

also in the *lalita* pose, exactly like Śiva. It is probably Taṇḍu or Bharata, imitating his master. This is a great masterpiece. The jewellery is very sparse but the carving is very effective (Fig. 9).

Vākāṭaka

The Vākāṭakas, who were contemporaries of the Guptas in the south, have not been a whit behind the latter in their portrayal of the dancing form of Śiva. The sculptures of Śiva, in the earlier Vākāṭaka caves at Ellora, are mostly in the *lalita*, *chatura*, *kaṭisama*, *talasamsphoṭita* and other poses and there is another equally interesting dancing form in the Elephant cave. The last one is probably unsurpassed in the golden age of Indian art. For sheer rhythmic movement, delicacy of contour line and limpid grace in form and texture,



FIG. 10. Śiva dancing in lalita, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Ellora.

there is nothing to approach this piece. The fact is that this is a highly developed sculptural version of the concept of dance. Varieties in all these different dance forms necessarily presuppose a great sculptural erudition in the representation of such figure types, as in the case of the art of the dance itself, which has had a long tradition before it was effectively codified in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

The Ellora caves provide a wealth of iconographic detail. The theme of Naṭarāja has been a great favourite with the sculptor here. In Cave 14 is a typical Vākāṭaka sculpture, showing Śiva dancing in the *lalita* pose. He is eight-armed. The main arms are, however, in *gajahasta* and *āhūyavarada*. He carries also the drum, the *khaṭvāṅga*, the snake and other attributes. He almost seems to be supporting the universe with one of his arms, while with another in *abhaya*, he indicates a benevolent assurance. The description of the dance pose, *karihasto*

bhaved vāmo dakṣiṇas cha vivartitaḥ bahuśaḥ kuṭṭitaḥ pādo jñeyam tallalitam budhaiḥ, is almost answered here, as the leg is portrayed in action and the *gajahasta*, though broken, is very forceful, and the other hand as it should be. The flutist, the drummer, with the *ūrdhva* drum, and the musician, sounding cymbals, are all Gaṇas. Peeping from behind Śiva's legs is an emaciated figure, Atiriktāṅga, probably Bhṛīṅgi. To the left, Devī is watching and enjoying Śiva's dance, holding the hand of baby Skanda, who is standing on the ground. All around, over the clouds, are assembled the celestials, including the Dikpālas, like Agni on his ram and Indra on his elephant. Brahmā and Viṣṇu, on their respective vehicles, also appear above to the left. Śiva is dancing, not on Apasmāra, but on the rocky ground, indicating his dance on the Himālayas (Fig. 10).

From Cave 15 comes the beautiful dancing figure of Naṭarāja in the *chatura* pose. The main



FIG. 11. Śiva dancing in chatura, Vākāṭaka, 6th century A.D., Cave 22, Ellora.

hands are in *gajahasta* and *saṁdamśa*. *Samdamśa* is significant as it shows him in his attitude as teacher. The great celestials, acting as musicians, are shown at his feet, seated and sounding the cymbals, playing the flute and so forth. Śiva is multi-armed and dancing on the ground on a *padmapīṭha*, a characteristic which at once reveals the occurrence of a northern trait.

A fine sculpture from Cave 21 shows Śiva, seated as the first in a group of Saptamātrikās, with the *vīṇā* which he is playing, against his chest. The detail of *jaṭā*, the *prabhā*, the delicacy of carving, the peculiar ornamentation, with pearl tassels for the necklet at intervals, the *muktāyajñopavīta* in strands, twisted and running over the right arm, all point to early workmanship (Fig. 8). Similarly, he has a fine tasteful arrangement of *jaṭā* against an elongated halo, and decoration for the ear lobes, in ear ornaments, that differ on each side. This shows Śiva as closely associated with music as with dance.

As a sequel to this charming musical figure is Śiva dancing in *chatura* from the same cave (Fig. 11). One of the legs is just removed from *svastika* and the left foot is in *kuṭṭita*. The hands are also as the text would have them, on the navel in *khaṭakāmukha* and on the hip, *svastikāpasritaḥ pādau karau nābhikaṭisthitau pārśvamudvāhitam chaiva karanam tat kaṭisamam*. Unfortunately, the hands showing the main features are a little mutilated, but enough remains to clearly indicate the *khaṭakāmukha* of the right hand, against the navel, and the left hand on the waist. This is a glorious representation of a number of musical figures surrounding the main deity, one playing the *ūrdhva* drum, the other a flute and yet another, in the background, an instrument not very clear. To the left, there are female musicians, one of them thrumming the *vīṇā*, and another keeping time with cymbals. Pārvatī stands on one side watching, with baby Skanda on her hip. There is what appears probably Nandikeśvara, with a prominent *jaṭā*-



FIG. 12. *Naṭarāja dancing in lalita, the finest example, Vākāṭaka, 5th-6th century A.D., Elephanta.*

bhāra on his head, standing close by, watching the dance movement of his Lord. With one hand, Śiva seems almost to support heaven above, while the other hand, holding the drum, is sounding creation. There is Gaṇeśa to his right, enjoying the music and witnessing the dance. Up above, on either side, over the clouds, are Brahmā on a swan, Viṣṇu on Garuḍa, Indra on the celestial elephant, besides several other deities, on their respective vehicles. The magnificent arrangement of the coiffure of Śiva, with pearl tassels at intervals as decoration, an elaborate tassel-decorated necklace, *ananta* armlets, a heavy *yajñopavīta* running over the right arm, and the waist also elaborately worked, all represent a delightful creation of the Vākāṭaka sculptor, who has tried to express his infinite appreciation of Śiva's *tāṇḍava* in this masterpiece he has created.

In the Elephanta cave, the Vākāṭaka sculptor has fashioned a wonder of a Naṭarāja, dancing in

the *lalita* pose, eight-armed (Fig. 12). Unfortunately, the sculpture is mutilated. Still it clearly answers the definition of *lalita*, *karihasio bhaved vāmo dakṣiṇas cha vivartitaḥ bahuśaḥ kuṭṭitaḥ pādaḥ*. Like a musician, lost in his music, Śiva with almost closed eyes is lost in his own joy of the rhythm of dance. The lower right hand in *daṇḍahasta* is as prominent as the farthest left hand raised up to remove a screen or *yavanikā*. Among the *pañchakṛityas* of Śiva, the creation of *māyā* and the removal of it to vouchsafe for the devotee liberation from birth, sustenance and death, is itself very significant. The scene, hence, is very significant as it is *māyā* and its removal. Devī, to his left, is watching the dance with deep satisfaction. Her graceful stance is worthy of the Vākāṭaka master. While Viṣṇu, holding *gadā* and *chakra*, mounted on Garuḍa, along with Indra on the elephant, is fluttering above, to the left of Śiva, Brahmā, on a fleet of swans, is watching with ecstasy the great dance of Naṭarāja, which is the exposition of

the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, of which, as its progenitor, he is doubly happy. In appreciative mood, Gaṇeśa is shown jumping in the sky. Other Ṛishis are watching with delight, and Nandikeśvara, human-headed, with the *vetradanḍa* in his hand, stands also to the right, with his left hand in an attitude expressing 'how wonderful is the dance'. The drummer, to the right, is earnestly playing the *ūrdhva* drum, while Bhṛingi, to the left of the drum, has his emaciated hand lifted up in joyous ejaculations. Śiva holds in one of the hands to the right an axe, on which is entwined the snake Vāsuki, which almost seems to live and move, lifting its hood in rapturous appreciation of Śiva's dance, as if Patañjali himself, in complete zoomorphic form, is experiencing the joy of Śiva's *tāṇḍava*. The beautiful coronet on Śiva's head, half hiding the gracefully bound up locks of the *jaḷās*, the ear ornament nestling softly on the shoulders, the elegant armlets and the not too prominent, but strikingly artistic *udarabandha*, as well as the folds of the under garments, spread fan-like on his thigh, as well as the necklet, lightly wrought on the chest around the neck, are all features that mark the Vākāṭaka sculptor, who created this panel as one of the greatest masterpieces that Indian genius has given to the world.

Sixty miles to the south of Aurangābād is Dhokeśvara, where a cave temple for Śiva is cut out of the living rock. Its importance is that it is the only temple lying along the ancient trade route from the north, running through Ujjain southward through Ajaṇṭā and Aurangābād to the Konkan. In this cave temple, the two ends of the *mahāmaṇḍapa*, leading on to the *garbhagriha*, are especially devoted to the *Mātrikās* on one side and Naṭarāja on the other. In the case of Naṭarāja, the panel is almost enshrined within a miniature *maṇḍapa*, created by carving a pair of pillars, to produce this shrine niche for Naṭarāja. Due importance is therefore given to this form of Naṭarāja in the rock-cut temple complex itself. Śiva has eight arms. The attributes he carries are the drum, the snake, the noose and the trident. Of the other hands, two on the right are in *gajahasta* and *kaṭihasta* and the other two to the left are in *abhaya* and, probably, *alapallava*. The dancing Śiva shown here is in the *lalita* pose. A group, composed of Gaṇeśa and Gaṇas, two musicians and three dancers, is roughly hewn and appears incomplete. Though the cave is to be assigned to the sixth century, the aesthetic quality and workmanship of the figures are not the best. Naṭarāja, however, appears superior to the rest



FIG. 13. Śiva as saptasvaramaya musical master personifying the seven notes, four musical Gaṇas, playing the four principal instruments, the *viṇā*, flute, drum and cymbals, at his feet, Vākāṭaka, 5th century A.D., Parel.

of the carvings here. This cave is to be dated in the last phase of the Vākāṭaka period.

The beautiful Vākāṭaka sculpture from Parel, representing Śiva as the musical master and the personification of the seven principal musical notes—*Saptasvaramaya*—is a remarkable carving, coming very close to the concept of the great master of dance (Fig. 13). The Gaṇas, that swell the orchestra of Śiva as he dances, are here actually playing the musical instruments.



FIG. 14. Multi-armed Śiva dancing as *Vīṇādhara*, inscribed stele, Bhañja, 6th century A.D., Asanapaṭ, Orissa.

The harp and guitar-shaped varieties of the *vīṇā* are both shown. One of them is playing the flute. While all the six figures that make up this composite figure have a single pair of arms, the seventh, at the top, is eight-armed and, actually, the topmost pair of arms appears to be in the attitude of gesticulation, almost as if attending to the hair dressing arrangement or *āhārya*, as a preliminary for dance.

Early Bhañja

Close on the representation of Śiva in Gupta and Vākāṭaka sculpture comes the inscribed multi-armed Śiva dancing with the *vīṇā* in his hands, combining in himself music as well as dance, as the supreme preceptor of both. This inscription, which mentions a Bhañja king from Orissa, Mahārāja Śatrubhañja, is in an early script and mentions its creator as a king who

was versatile and liberal. This sculpture from Asanapaṭ is so developed in its iconography that there is no mistaking the existence of an established earlier tradition (Fig. 14).

Vishṇukuṇḍin

Connected by matrimony with the Vākāṭakas were the Vishṇukuṇḍins. Vikramendra, the Vishṇukuṇḍin king, who was the maternal grandfather of the Pallava king Mahendrarman I, has a figure of dancing Śiva on the top of the triple-celled cave, at Mugalrājapuram near Bezwāḍa (Fig. 15). It represents Śiva, dancing multi-armed in the *ūrdhvajānu* pose, trampling Apasmāra, and swaying his many arms in aesthetic rhythm. This is indeed the earliest Natarāja figure in the southern part of India, as the early Pallava one of the Dharmarājaratha at Mahābalipuram is later than this by at least three quarters of a century. This is unfortunately badly mutilated.

Almost as if the line is drawn here between the north and the south, there is a commingling of the northern and southern features. The numerous arms for the dancing figure is a characteristic from the north, while trampling Apasmāra is a feature from the south. There is



FIG. 15. Multi-armed Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, 6th century A.D., Vishṇukuṇḍin, Mugalrājapuram cave, Bezwāḍa.



FIG. 16. Multi-armed Śiva dancing, early Pallava, 6th century A.D., Bhairavakoṇḍa cave, Nellore Distt.

a combination of both here. It may be recalled that at Bādāmī, the multi-armed form of Śiva, dancing opposite the bull, is purely in northern style, while not very far away, at Paṭṭaḍakal, the dance of Śiva is on Apasmāra. The arms are limited to four, as in the south, though the *vṛishabhadhvaja* is specially shown in the hand of the lord of dance.

While the Naṭarāja on the Dharmarājaratha has only four arms and dances on Apasmāra, the Naṭarāja from Kūram, the earliest bronze figure of Śiva in this form, dances in *ūrdhva-jānu*, like the Vishṇukuṇḍin figure on the Mugalrājapuram cave, though with only four arms instead of eight.

The inspiration from the Vishṇukuṇḍin territory continued for some time, and we have a glorious bronze figure again, a Pallava one, in the multi-armed form from Nallūr, dancing on Apasmāra.

Early Pallava

In close association with Vishṇukuṇḍin sculpture should be studied the carvings from the Bhairavakoṇḍa cave temple in Nellore district. This cave is believed to have been exca-

vated by Śirṃhavishṇu, the son-in-law of the Vishṇukuṇḍin king, Vikramendra. It comes very close to the Pallava type in its earliest phase. Mahendravarman should certainly have taken pride in this creation of his father and followed the tradition. Still, the form of the *śūla*, and several other features also, suggest Vākāṭaka and early Chālukya style, which bring them nearer Vishṇukuṇḍin than Pallava, to an extent. However, the admixture of both does demonstrate that no territory can have an absolute indifference to the style of another, as at least here and there would appear a flash of it. Śiva's dance in a panel, adjacent to that of Harihara at Bhairavakoṇḍa, is indeed significant, as it shows how Śiva could combine in himself *kaiśikī* and *ārabhaṭī* types, the delicate and the forceful (Fig. 16).

Śiva has eight hands to hold the fire, trident, drum, *khaṭvāṅga* or *vṛishabhadhvaja* and the hissing snake, with hood up, while the main hands are in *abhaya* and thrown up in glee in *ardha-mattalī*. Earrings, one large and another small, suggest the *ardhanārīśvara* in him. This is equally clear in the halves of the body itself, where one is dynamic and the other static. The static form of Harihara has also eight arms. The axe, tri-



FIG. 17. Śiva dancing in chatura, 6th century A.D., Cave No. 1, Bādāmi, Mysore.

dent, rosary and *abhaya* are held on the Śiva side and the conch, wheel, sword and *katya-valambita* are held on the other, for Vishṇu. Half the *jaṭā* and half the *maṭṭa*, rather prominent like the earrings in the case of Śiva, pronounce the figure Harihara. This sixth century sculpture of Naṭarāja is to be shared between the Viṣṇukunḍins and the Pallavas for its inspiration and execution.

It may be recalled that Viṣṇu created *kaiśikīrīti*, in the charming movements of his limbs, as he arranged his curls of hair (*keśa*), and *kaiśikī* is rightly on the Viṣṇu half, while Śiva, whose main forte is *tāṇḍava*, is on the other half of the Harihara figure. In the adjacent Naṭarāja panel, however, it is the combination of *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, his mastery of both suggested through the eternal *ardhanārīśvara*.

Early Western Chālukya

Among the early Western Chālukyan representations of Śiva's dance, the one from Bādāmī cave is very effective (Fig. 17), but, another, which is less known but equally important, is from the Rāwalpāḍī cave at Aihole, with features unusually long, and slightly more primitive than the Bādāmī one. A special feature of this sculpture is that Śiva here dances amidst Mātrikās and his *jaṭāmakūṭa*, like the *makūṭa* and the limbs of the other figures flanking him, is very elongated.

In the temples at Paṭṭaḍakal, like the Chandraśekhara and the Kāśivīśveśvara, we can see the universal tradition in India of representing prominently the dancing form of Śiva on the façade of the top of the *vimāna*, in a large circular niche, in a *kūḍu* arch decoration. In both these temples, Śiva is multi-armed and dancing in the *chatura* pose, attended by Pārvatī who stands close by, watching with admiration the perfection of the Lord's dance. In the Chandraśekhara temple, the medallion shows also the bull behind Śiva which is a regular feature in north Indian representations of dancing Śiva, except in Bengal and, very occasionally, in Assam and Orissa, where he dances on the bull.

Of the early Western Chālukya sculptures, a very important one is from the Kannada Research Institute Museum at Dhārwar (Fig. 18). This is from Paṭṭaḍakal and belongs to the time of Vikramāditya, who built the famous Virūpāksha temple. This Śiva is six-armed. His *jaṭās* are arranged in a very natural way, and they almost seem to get animated and move like snakes on an anthill. The *kapāla*, on top, with the teeth prominent, seems merrily to enjoy the fun. The two main hands are in *abhaya* and *karihasta*. The *abhaya*, it may be noted, is not with the thumb apart, but touching the first finger, as if to indicate *patāka*. The sculptor is dance conscious. While the hands carrying the *śūla* and the *uttariya* are in *khaṭakāmukha*, the third right hand is either in *katyavalambita*, as styled in the sculptor's parlance, or somewhat approaches *siṃhamukha*. The third left hand is the most significant of all, as it is held in *samdamśa*, according to *nāṭya* parlance, or *chinmudrā* or *vyākhyāna-mudrā*, according to *śilpa* terminology. Śiva is moving on from either *lalita* to *chatura* or vice versa. He is almost admonishing the *nāṭya* terminology, and thus *vyākhyānamudrā* is most suggestive from that point of view, as it



FIG. 18. Six-armed Śiva dancing, early Western Chālukya, probably from Virūpāksha temple, 8th century A.D., Paṭṭaḍakal, Kannada Research Institute, Dhārwar.

indicates that Śiva is teaching, and, in this case, dance.

Among the early Western Chālukya sculptures of Naṭarāja, the one most interesting to compare with the figure from Cave I at Bādāmī is the carving from the Rāwalpāḍī cave at Aihole. Here, Naṭarāja dances almost as in the Bādāmī cave. It is impossible to believe that both these are almost of the same date and of the same school, as the details in workmanship and style are entirely different in both. But it is a definitely known fact that both the caves are Western Chālukya, though the figures in Rāwalpāḍī cave are probably the creation of a peculiar minded Chālukyan craftsman, who was a genius in his own way, but different from the general norm of the school. The snakes are more alive and swing or sway with greater ease and almost seem to live. The sculptor seems to revel in introducing a large number of snakes as



FIG. 19. Śiva on façade of Jambuliṅgeśvara temple, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Pattadakal.



FIG. 20. Detail of Śiva on façade of Jambuliṅgeśvara temple, Pattadakal.

different types of ornaments for Śiva. While at Bādāmī, it is only a single snake, held up above the head with two of his upper hands, at Aihole, a snake is held exactly like this, and in addition, a very huge one is made to run across the chest, hand and shoulder, like the *yajñopavīta*, to simulate the heavy roll over the right arm in early Chāḷukya and Pallava sculptures. There is another snake evidently tied on the waist as a *kaṭisūtra*. The natural curvilinear contour of the snake and its tail almost resting on the upper garment, running over the thighs as a semi-circular loop, is indeed most interesting. Such a plethora of snake ornamentation is not often met with, even in the representation of Śiva, whose jewel is a snake, on which account poets have referred to the nether world as the jewel box of Śiva—*bhūṣhāpeṭi bhuvanam adharam*. The moon is also very prominently shown, at the top of the rather elongated cylindrical *jaṭā-makūṭa*, which is so different from the natural, early type of *jaṭā* arrangement at Bādāmī. Even the halo is here somewhat conventionalised and is a ribbed *śiraśchakra*, rather than the large and pleasing oval-shaped halo at Bādāmī.

It appears like *vikshiptākshiptakam*, with the hands and legs reversed, as in a mirror. If the uppermost right hand and the lowermost left

hand are considered for this pose in relation to the position of the legs, it looks more like *valita*. Flanking Śiva are Gaṇeśa and Skanda, both shown as youngsters. To the left of dancing Śiva, Pārvatī is gazing at his dance, standing at ease. The Mātṛikās are shown on either side, some dancing and others gazing at Śiva's dance in admiration. While Devī is wearing the *āpra-padīna* dress reaching down to her ankles, all the Mātṛikās, except four, are shown wearing *ardhorukas* or shorts for convenience in dance. Perched above, and almost between the high crowns of Mātṛikās, is dancing Bhṛīṅgi, bare and skeleton-like. The bull, usually shown behind Śiva, is absent here.

The popularity of the Natarāja theme in Śiva temples at Pattadakal may be easily seen in the fact that in the Jambuliṅga temple, the façade shows Śiva dancing beside the bull, with Devī to his left, watching his dance (Fig. 19, 20). In the centre of the lintel of the Galganāth temple, also at Pattadakal, there is a prominent figure of Śiva dancing in the *chatura* pose, with four hands, the main ones in the normal *abhaya* and *gajahasta*, and the other two carrying the *triśūla* and *khaṭvāṅga*. On a pillar of a dilapidated *maṇḍapa* of one of the many temples at Pattadakal, there is again a pro-



FIG. 21. Śiva dancing swaying his body, on pillar with Śūrpaṇakhā panel below it, Virūpāksha temple, early Western Chālukya, Pattadakal.

minent panel depicting Śiva's dance in *lalita*, with Devī to his left. There is a regular musical orchestra with the *ūrdhva* and *aṅkya* drum, played by *Gaṇas*. The spectators of the dance make an interesting composition.

The Virūpāksha temple at Pattadakal has exquisite carvings, narrating various Purāṇic stories, like Indra's approaches at Ahalyā, scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Vishṇupurāṇa* and so forth. On one of the pillars, above a long narration in carved panels of the story of Śūrpaṇakhā and Kharadūshaṇa, there is a semi-circular panel depicting Śiva's dance, swaying his body, with his hands raised to hold the snake, and the legs crossed (Fig. 21). He has four arms, one of which holds the *khaṭvāṅga*, and the other rests on the shoulder of Devī, who complacently watches the dance. With lifted leg and intelligently turned face, Nandi listens to the music and appreciates the dance. The musical orchestra is supplied by *Gaṇas*, one playing the flute, another the *ūrdhva* drum and a third sounding the cymbals. It is almost like *parivṛitta*, except that the legs are crossed and confirm a *svastika*.

Yet another carving, from a pillar in the same temple, presents an elaborate dance scene (Fig. 22). Śiva is eight-armed dancing in the reverse of the *ardhamattallī*. While for *ardhamattallī*



FIG. 22. Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *ardhamattallī*, with Pārvatī watching, and *kalahaṁsas* suggesting the loving pair of musical figures, Virūpāksha temple, Pattadakal.

the definition is *skhalitāpasṛitau pāḍau vāmahastā cha rechitāḥ*, *savyahastāḥ kaṭisthas syād ardhamattallī tat smṛitam*, it is here the left hand on the waist and the right hand thrown up in *rechita*. The other right hands carry the *khaṭvāṅga* and other indistinct attributes, while one of the hands to the left carries a vessel of fire, but more interesting is one of the arms that fondles the chin of Devī, who joyously sways towards Śiva to accept his caressing. It is interesting that the loving sport of Śiva and Pārvatī is reflected and suggestively made more pronounced in its meaning by a pair of seated swans, *kalahaṁsas*, in the vicinity of Pārvatī, with their necks entwined lovingly. While Vidyādhara and Kinnara couples float in the air and ap-



FIG. 23. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu pose, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Mallikārjuna temple, Paṭṭadakal

ed in the description of the *karāṇa*. Śiva is in a jovial mood. In one of the four arms, the main right arm, there is a snake, which he is offering to Pārvatī jokingly, so that she could adorn herself with the jewel, specially as she is admiring her beauty in a mirror she holds in her hand. A Gaṇa and Gaṇapati, to the right and left of Śiva and Pārvatī respectively, appreciate this joke and witness the scene with a chuckle. What looks like a mouse, the vehicle of Gaṇeśa himself, enjoys the fun and jumps at Pārvatī almost in the vein of the nursery rhyme 'the cow jumped over the moon'. It can also be seen that Pārvatī is a little scared at a snake being brought so close to her and one cannot but be reminded of the verse, which talks of the incongruity of the fearful snake, the jewel of Śiva, in the vicinity of the delicate princess of the mountain kingdom.

In the Pāpanātha temple at Paṭṭadakal,



FIG. 24. Śiva in chatura dancing on Apasmāra, with bull behind, from ceiling, Pāpanātha temple, Paṭṭadakal, Early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D.

proach Śiva to watch his dance and even ṛishis, at a distance, admire his exposition, the music is supplied by Gaṇas, prominent among whom is the musician sounding the pot, a huge *ghaṭa*.

Yet another sculpture from the Mallikārjuna temple at Paṭṭadakal represents Śiva's ūrdhvajānu tāṇḍava (Fig. 23). It is almost a jump up with the right leg bent and the knee raised, as requir-

there is a carving on the ceiling, representing Śiva's dance in *chatura* on Apasmāra, with the bull behind him. He has four arms, two in the normal *abhaya* and *gajahasta*, the other carrying the *triśūla* and snake. Even Devī stands in perfect poise, with her left hand in *khaṭakāmukha*, the right resting on the waist, the right leg crossed against the left in such a manner that even her *sthāna* is more charming than a

movement in dance: *nr̥ittād asyās sthīlam atitarām kāntam r̥ijvāya-tārdham* (Fig. 24).

There are musical figures on either side, one playing the *ghaṭa*, yet another the flute, and the third the cymbals, all of them Gaṇas.

Another charming dance of Śiva, in the pose *chatura* on Apasmāra with the bull behind him, represents the divine dancer with eight arms. The *khaṭvāṅga*, *triśūla*, *nāga* and other attributes are clearly shown. The right hand, instead of being in *abhaya*, is in *āhūyavarada*, while the main left is in *gajahasta*. Devī stands gracefully, with the right hand in *khaṭakāmukha*, and the left in *lola*. While musical Gaṇas are shown around him on the ground, near his feet on either side, the Dikpālas, Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Kubera and others are shown almost surrounding him. This is an exceedingly interesting sculpture and leads us on to the concept of Śiva, as one of the eight lords of the quarters, inspiring the Dikpālas themselves to dance. It is here only an interest in dance that they evince and gaze at the supreme dancer as he performs. There are Kākatīya sculptures of later date which present individually each Dikpāla engaged in dance.

In the Jambuliṅgeśvara temple, also, at Paṭṭaḍakal, the theme of Naṭarāja, dancing in *chatura*, is portrayed in an arched *kūḍu*, crowned by *śimhamukha*. Śiva is dancing not on Apasmāra but on the ground, with Nandī behind him and Devī to his left. He is six-armed and carries the axe, snake and drum, with one of his left hands on the shoulders of Devī in loving embrace; the main hands are in *āhūyavarada* and *karihasta*.

In the Huchiappa temple at Aihole, there is a very significant representation of Śiva's dance (Fig. 25). He is shown eight-armed and dancing almost in *rechita nikutṭita*. Instead of the right hand being in *rechita*, it is the left hand here. It is almost the reverse picture of *rechita nikutṭita*, though it is correctly the right leg that is *nikutṭita*. It almost answers the description: *rechito dakṣhiṇo hastah pādas savyo nikutṭitah dolā chaiva bhaved vāmaḥ tad rechitanikkutṭitam*.



FIG. 25. Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *rechita nikutṭita*, early Western Chālukya, Huchiappa temple, Aihole.

As there are innumerable arms, with one of the right arms in *rechita*, while one to the left is in *dolā*, we could even consider it a complete and correct representation of *rechita nikutṭita*. He carries the drum in one of his right hands, a snake, the *khaṭvāṅga* and a *pāśa* in two of his left hands, while one rests on his hip. There is Apasmāra shown below his feet, both of which rest on his back as they tread on them. Bhṛīṅgī, the very appearance of a skeleton, is also seated enjoying the dance. A Gaṇa is sounding the *ūrdhvaka* drum. Gaṇeśa is jumping in the air in glee. Towards the left of Śiva stands Pārvatī looking on and admiring the dance of the Lord. On her hip, there is Skanda, who, as a baby in arms, is absorbed in his juvenile revelry, unaware of the glory of the dance of his father. Pārvatī's hand rests on the head of a *vāmanikā*, a dwarf attendant of hers, whose face, with mouth wide open, again expresses wonder. Another Gaṇa is towards the extreme left, probably also handling a drum.

From the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭaḍakal, there is a sculpture of eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*, on a large-sized dwarf Apasmāra. In one of his right arms is the drum and in another a snake, that swirls about with raised hood and frightens spectators. There is a fire in another right hand, while yet another is in *alapadma* or wonder. Śiva's face itself suggests wonder. The front top right and left hands are both in *saṁdamśa*, suggesting that he is the supreme dancer, lord of *nāṭyaveda*, the science of *nāṭya*. In one of the left hands is a vessel, full of fire.



FIG. 26. Four-armed Śiva dancing on Apasmāra carrying nandidhvaja, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Virūpāksha temple, Paṭṭaḍakal.

The large *kinḱinī* bells on the legs suggest the rhythm of his dance.

In the Virūpāksha temple there is another lovely image of Śiva, four-armed, dancing on Apasmāra in *ūrdhvajānu*. Apart from his normal hands in *abhaya* and *gajahasta*, there is the drum and *Nandidhvaja* in the others. Śivagaṇas play musical instruments, one the *ghaṭa* and the other the flute. Above Śiva, there are Vidyādhara couples and Gandharvas, fluttering and

watching with great enthusiasm and appreciation (Fig. 26).

The group of temples at Ālampūr provides some of the finest Chālukya examples of the early phase. In the Pāpanāśinī temple is an eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*. In the place of the snake, that is held taut by the upraised hands near the head, there is a thick roll of flower garland. The drum and *śula* are held in arms to the right, but the last one is stretched across the chest in *gajahasta* attitude. The main left arm is in the *samdamśa*, while the other two hold a book and a snake. This is interesting, as the hand in *samdamśa* and the book in his hand suggest *nāṭyaveda*, the science of *nāṭya* itself, of which he is the master. Two Gaṇas on either side play one a *ghaṭa* and the other the cymbals.

Another sculpture from the Virabhadra temple at the same place represents eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*. The main arms are *samdamśa* and *gajahasta* while one of the left arms is lovingly placed on the shoulder of Pārvatī who is standing close to him in deep appreciation of his magnificent dance. A Gaṇa is playing the *ghaṭa*. This is very much in the tradition of the Paṭṭaḍakal sculptures.

Another sculpture, also from the museum, is from a ceiling. The Chālukyan tradition has been to show Nāṭarāja in the centre of the ceiling and the Dikpālas all around. This Śiva has four arms. In contrast to the normal mode, it is here the right hand represented in *gajahasta*, the left hand being in *samdamśa*, for suggesting Śiva as the teacher of dance. The other two hands carry the *triśūla* and the snake. He dances on a lotus in the *lalita* pose. There are two Gaṇas on either side, one playing the *ūrdhva* drum, the other sounding the flute. Two Vidyādharas are shown flying above, in adoration, and flank Śiva. There is another in the Ālampūr Museum representing the same theme, in almost exactly the same way, except that of the two Gaṇas, one is banging large cymbals. The Vidyādharas are also present. This is also from the ceiling.

The Ālampūr group of temples represents exquisite early Chālukyan workmanship of the Paṭṭaḍakal type. In a small temple as we enter, the Tāraka Brahmā as it is known, the left jamb of the doorway of the cell has at the bottom a representation of Devī dancing to the sound of the orchestra around her, including the flute, the drum and the cymbals.

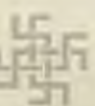




FIG. 27. Gaṅgādhara as dancer receiving Gaṅgā on his locks, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., from Caruḍa temple, Ālampūr.

The importance of the Nāṭarāja theme in Chālukyan sculpture would be at once clear from the fact that it is very often represented on the façade of the *vimāna* on the *sukhanāsa*. Here also on the front façade of the *vimāna*, there is a large, but unfortunately worn, sculpture of Nāṭarāja. A similar figure on the façade of the *vimāna* can also be seen in the Vīra Brahmā temple. Nāṭarāja is there in the company of Devī and musicians forming the orchestra.

In the next temple, known as Svarga Brahmā, there is a peculiar sixteen-armed sculpture of Śiva, pausing after a course of dance. The main interest in this piece is that this is Gaṅgādhara, which is very clear from the fact that Bhagīratha is shown performing penance; but that this is also Śiva dancing is clear from the dancing figures like Bhṛīṅgī, Devī to the left watching the dance, Śiva having his right leg on Apasmāra, and the bull behind Bhṛīṅgī, also watching his master's movements. Though the hands are broken, there is yet the veil held in one of the hands to the left, in the attitude of Śiva removing the

veil of illusion (*Māyā*), which is another important characteristic of the dancing Lord in the Chālukyan territory. The explanation for this lies in the fact that Śiva does not merely dance, but dances to represent a theme, and that theme here is his presentation of the Gaṅgādhara aspect, how Śiva received Gaṅgā on his locks, acceding to the prayer of Bhagīratha. This is a very interesting sculpture, as it interprets one iconographic theme through another, the dancer interpreting the humbling of the pride of Gaṅgā, by receiving her on the locks.

There is yet another representation of Śiva dancing to show his Gaṅgādhara aspect from the Garuḍa Brahmā temple (Fig. 27). This is almost like the other, and very interesting by the fact that it confirms this tradition of representation. There are musical Gaṇas here and dancing Bhṛīṅgī, apart from Bhagīratha, and the dwarf Apasmāra, mutilated, on whose back he rests his leg. The Gaṅgādhara aspect is also very clear by the stream shown flowing with the fish running about in it.

Yet another sculpture from Svarga Brahmā temple shows Śiva dancing, not purely as a dancer, but as a victor over the Tripuras, dancing on the chariot itself. Śiva is eight-armed; the legs are unfortunately broken; he is in the *ālīḍhanṛitta* pose, with his hands in the attitude of fight, one pulling out the arrow from the quiver, another holding the snake, a third the *khaṭvāṅga*, the fourth pulling the string of the bow up to the ear: *ākarnākṛishta jyā*. In



FIG. 28. Śiva in the *lalita* pose from the façade of the Svarga temple, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Ālampūr.



FIG. 29. Śiva in lalita pose, from the façade of Svarga temple, Ālampūr.

this tumultuous situation Brahmā is unable to sit and is shown standing up. Even the horses are prancing.

In the Svarga Brahmā temple, there is another beautiful but unfortunately mutilated, sixteen-armed figure of Śiva dancing, in the *lalita* pose. Devī is in a contemplative mood, with her right hand in the attitude of keeping count of the rhythmic movement in consonance with the music that is provided. Probably, she herself is singing, and there is literary evidence

of the fact that Devī sings as Śiva dances. The other dancers here, who enthusiastically join the Mahānaṭa, or the great dancer, in the exposition of great themes, are Gaṇeśa and Bhṛīṅgī, Nandī from behind Naṭarāja. There are musical Gaṇas to the right, one sounding a pair of *ūrdhva* drums, another blowing the flute and a third sounding the cymbals. Unfortunately the arms as well as the legs of Śiva are badly mutilated. Nevertheless, it is an exceedingly fine image of dancing Śiva in the early Western Chālukyan tradition.

The façade of the Svarga Brahmā temple has a very beautiful eight-armed Naṭarāja dancing in *lalita*, with main right and left hands in *daṇḍahasta* and *saṃdamśa* respectively, two hands carrying the snake and axe and two in *tripatāka* (Fig. 28, 29). A Gaṇa on each side sounds the flute and the *ūrdhva* drum. The sacred thread is composed of pearls, *muktāyajñopavīta*.

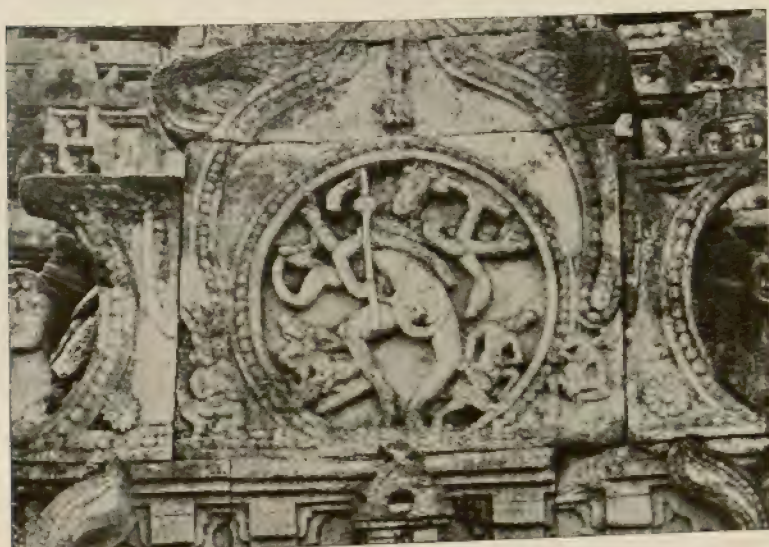


FIG. 30. Śiva dancing in lalita pose, from façade of Rāmalingeśvara temple, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Satyavolu.

One of the finest sculptures from Ālampūr is now in the local museum, which shows Śiva, eight-armed, dancing on the Dwarf Apasmāra, whose face beams with a smile in spite of the vigorous tread of the feet of Śiva on his back. The right hand of Śiva is in



FIG. 31. *The finest example of eight-armed Natarāja dancing on Apsmāra with musical Gaṇas all around, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Ālambūr Museum.*



FIG. 32. Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*, early Western Chālukya, Saṅgameśvara temple, Kundaveli.

āhūyavarada or *saṁdamśa*, symbolic of teaching, the left in *gajahasta*. The rest of the arms to the right carry the drum, the skull-cap and the axe, while the other arms to the left carry the *triśūla*, snake and fire. The musical Gaṇas flanking Śiva play one the flute and the other the *ūrdhva* drum (Fig. 31).

The usual mode of representing Natarāja in a medallion on the façade of the *vimāna* top in Chālukyan temples is seen in another excellent carving from the Rāmaliṅgeśvara temple at Satyavolu near Kurnool. It is an eight-armed Śiva, dancing in *lalita* with one of the right hands in *daṇḍahasta*, the corresponding left in *āhūyavarada*. The other hands hold a *nandihvaja* with a banner fluttering, the axe and snake, and indicate *tarjanī* and *vyākhyāna mudrā*. There is musical accompaniment (Fig. 30).

An early Western Chālukyan Natarāja, of the same time as those of Ālampūr and Satyavolu, is Śiva with fourteen arms dancing in *lalita*, from the Saṅgameśvara temple at Kundaveli (Fig. 32). Here there is vigorous action, depicted in consonance with deep musical resonance of the triple drum. Two-armed Gaṇeśa, to the left in the early style, almost silent in appreciation, lifts his right leg in involuntary sympathetic consonance with the rhythmic movement of his father. Atiriktāṅga Bhairava



FIG. 33. Śiva dancing with Kālī from ceiling, early Western Chālukya, 8th century A.D., Saṅgameśvara temple.



FIG. 34. Eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita* from south niche of temple, early Western Chāḷukya, 8th century A.D., Saṅgameśvara temple.

in peculiar challenging pose, between the legs, looks very interesting.

The niche behind a small projecting *maṇḍapa* to the south of the Saṅgameśvara temple has an exquisite dancing figure of Naṭarāja with eight arms (Fig. 34). He is shown in the *lalita* pose, with the main right hand and the left in *gajahasta* and *saṁdamśa* respectively, the uppermost two hands holding a thick roll of flower garland almost taut, the other two right hands carrying the drum and trident, the left ones carrying a snake and in *tripatāka*. The face is charming in its smile, *udarabandha*, the *ananta* armlet, the *kaṭisūtra*, the *jaṭāmakūṭa*, the *patra*- and *śiṃhākūṇḍalas* on his ear lobes, all adding to the grace of this delicately fashioned sculpture.

On the ceiling, Śiva is equally beautifully carved (Fig. 33) dancing in another moment

of the same *lalita* mode, the legs almost crossing, this time one of the hands fondling Devī, standing to his left, gazing at his dexterity in the movement of the limbs in dance, as he excels Kālī, whose moment of stance in *chatura* is portrayed to the left of the Lord of dance. In between, skeleton-like Bhṛiṅgī raises one of his bent legs in *ūrdhvajānu*. Further to the right are Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others watching the great performance. At the feet of the dancers are a pair of flutists, a drummer and a player on cymbals. The ceiling is an elaborate one with fluttering celestials and Dikpālas. This is indeed a triumph of the early Chāḷukya sculptor in this chosen theme in art.

Eastern Chāḷukya

The traditions of the homeland were carried to Veṅgī, when Kubjavishṇuvardhana and his immediate successors came to rule the newly acquired territory, through the victory of Pulakeśin, the great Western Chāḷukya king from Bādāmī. Close contact with the Kālīṅga area, that was for quite a long time practically under the protection of the Eastern Chāḷukyas, brought a fresh and charming stream of art traditions to enrich the main current of art of the Veṅgī territory. This enriched the general scheme and the colour of the school. Eastern Chāḷukya art is thus a store-house of blended traditions. Still, it is southern traditions that predominated.

The Eastern Chāḷukyas have left a number of monuments, though several are ruined and lost. In Biccavol village near Rājahmundry, there are important Eastern Chāḷukya temples, which throw great light on this little known phase of art.

The Naṭarāja image, in a niche to the back of the temple in the field, is a striking one, representing the deity dancing in the *chatura* pose (Fig. 35). Though this dance pose is in common with similar figures from the north, it, however, comes closer to the southern tradition in the number of arms which is only four. He, however, carries here the drum in one hand, the



FIG. 35. *Natarāja* in temple niche in a field near the village, Eastern Chāḷukya, 10th century A.D., Biccavolu.

śūla in another, while the *gajahasta* is also present. In a similar sculpture, also from Biccavolu, and probably from a niche in a similar temple, and now preserved in the Madras Museum, the same feature is observed (Fig. 36). He dances in the *chatura* pose, carries the drum and the *śūla* with his upper left hand in *gajahasta*. His face beams with a smile, and there are short *jaṭās* from his *jaṭāmakūṭa*, radiating all around, as a decoration for the halo. This is unfortunately a broken figure, but the characteristic simplicity of this school is evident in the carving. The necklace, the bracelets, armlets, ear-rings are all very simple and inobtrusive. Of this sculpture, the most important feature is the presence of the *ūrdhvaliṅga* for Śiva. This is a feature which is usual in the representations of Śiva from Bengal, Orissa and elsewhere. In the famous *Ardhanārīśvara* of the Dacca Museum, the Śiva half shows the *ūrdhvaliṅga*. In the case of *Haragaurī* of the Pāla period, *ūrdhvaliṅga* is a clear characteristic of Śiva. The antiquity of this tradition can be studied from a very early inscribed sculpture of *Haragaurī* from Kauśāmbī, belonging to the transition period from Kushāṇa to Gupta, where this *ūrdhvaliṅga* aspect is as prominent as the *virūpāksha*; and the third eye is not across the forehead but along its whole length. Yet another factor is that Śiva is here carrying a *śūla*, instead of an axe and deer, which is a special characteristic of the south. The *śūla* being more associated with the north, there is thus a happy blend of northern

FIG. 36. *Natarāja*, early Eastern Chāḷukya, 10th century A.D., Biccavolu, Madras Museum.





FIG. 37. Pallava cave with Naṭarāja sculpted on a pillar, Pallava, early 7th century A.D., Siyamaṅgalam.

and southern elements. These two are probably the only representations of dancing Śiva of the Eastern Chālukya school.

That dance and music were very popular, and that dance themes were freely chosen by the sculptor, can be easily understood from the exquisite carvings depicting musical groups, from the Jāmidoddi at Bezwāḍa. Both classical and folk group dance, like *daṇḍa-rāsa*, is represented in the sculpture from the Malleśvara temple at Bezwāḍa. The Biccavolu group of temples, which belong to the time of Guṇaga Vijayāditya, i.e. ninth century, represent the deity of music and dance, Śiva as Naṭarāja, in their niches.

Pallava

Even earlier than the carving on the Dharmarājaratha is the panel of Śiva dancing, from one of the heavy cubical pilasters of the Pallava cave temple at Siyamaṅgalam (Fig. 37, 38). This is probably the earliest representation of Śiva

dancing in the *bhujāṅgāñchita*. Though the right hand is in *abhaya*, the left is thrown across the chest in *gajahasta* fashion, the other right hand carries a bowl of fire, while the fourth holds the axe. The *jaṭā* whirls all around. The moon is very prominent on the *jaṭā*, but in a very unconventional way. Śiva has heavy anklets on the feet, to suggest the rhythm of *tāla*. Of the flanking Śivagaṇas, one plays the *ūrdhva* drum, while the other sounds the cymbals. The most interesting, however, is the snake that has coiled itself with the hood raised, listening to the sweet strains of music. Apasmāra is absent at this stage, though he appears at Mahābali-puram.

There are four or five significant sculptures on the Dharmarājaratha, which have to be studied carefully to understand the effect of dance tradition on the mind of the sculptor. Śiva dances on Apasmāra, holding the axe in one of the right arms, while the other is held in *alapadma* to suggest wonder; of the arms to the



FIG. 38. Śiva dancing in bhujaṅga-trāsita, from pillar in a cave, Pallava, early 7th century A.D., Siyamaṅalam.

left, one is in *abhaya*, while the other is in the *ardhachandra* or *patāka*. He dances vigorously on Apasmāra, shown larger in size than usual. This is the moment before his lifting up his leg to make it *ūrdhvajānu* (Fig. 39).

There is a Viṇādhara (Fig. 40) with the principal hands holding the *vīṇā*, while the others suggest *tripatāka* and *mṛigaśirsha*, *nātyahastas* which connect dance with music. There is another, where Śiva holds the *vīṇā* with the legs crossed, one hand holding the *ḍamaru* and the other rest-

ing on a Gaṇa's head (Fig. 41). The *jaṭābhāra*, which this Viṇādakṣiṇamūrti wears as the arrangement of his hair, as well as the crossing of the legs, and the *ḍamaru*, as the drum in the orchestra, suggest that he is the lord of music and the orchestra as well as of dance. It is interesting that the Gaṇa listens and practises the step in *Kuñchita* fashion.

This preceptorship of Śiva is made more explicit in two other sculptures in the vicinity. One is a Śiva with his legs crossed, standing as



FIG. 39. Śiva dancing on *Apaśmāra* on *vimāna*, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Dharmarājaratha, Mahābalīpuram.

usual for *Vṛishabhāntika* or *Vṛishabhavāhana*-mūrti, instructing Nandī on the principles of *nāṭya*. This is suggested by the bent head of Nandī, listening with great devotion and attention. Śiva's face itself is turned towards Nandī. The drum in his other right arm and the *tri-patāka* of the left hand suggest *nṛtta* and *abhinaya*, *svara* and *sāhitya* in dance. It is noteworthy that here also Śiva wears *vastra yajñopavīta* as normally the teacher, i.e. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, should. The hair is arranged in *jaṭābhāra* (p. 97, Fig. 6,7).

In another panel, again wearing the *jaṭā-*

bhāra, but this time holding the *śūla* and *paraśu*, Śiva, with one of his hands in *saṁdamśa*, the same as *chinmudrā*, teaches. His hair is in *jaṭābhāra* as the teacher *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. He is teaching Taṇḍu, the essence of *tāṇḍava*. The various *chārī* and *rechita* movements of the foot, the *karaṇas* with the *nāṭya hastas* and *patāka* and others are watched by him, as Taṇḍu practises in his presence. The up-raised left foot is here significant. Taṇḍu wears the *jaṭā* as a ṛishi should. He does not wear the beard as the great teachers are preferably young. According to the Upanishadic saying it is—*yuvā syād sādhu yuvādhyāpakaḥ*. This is apparently an epitomy

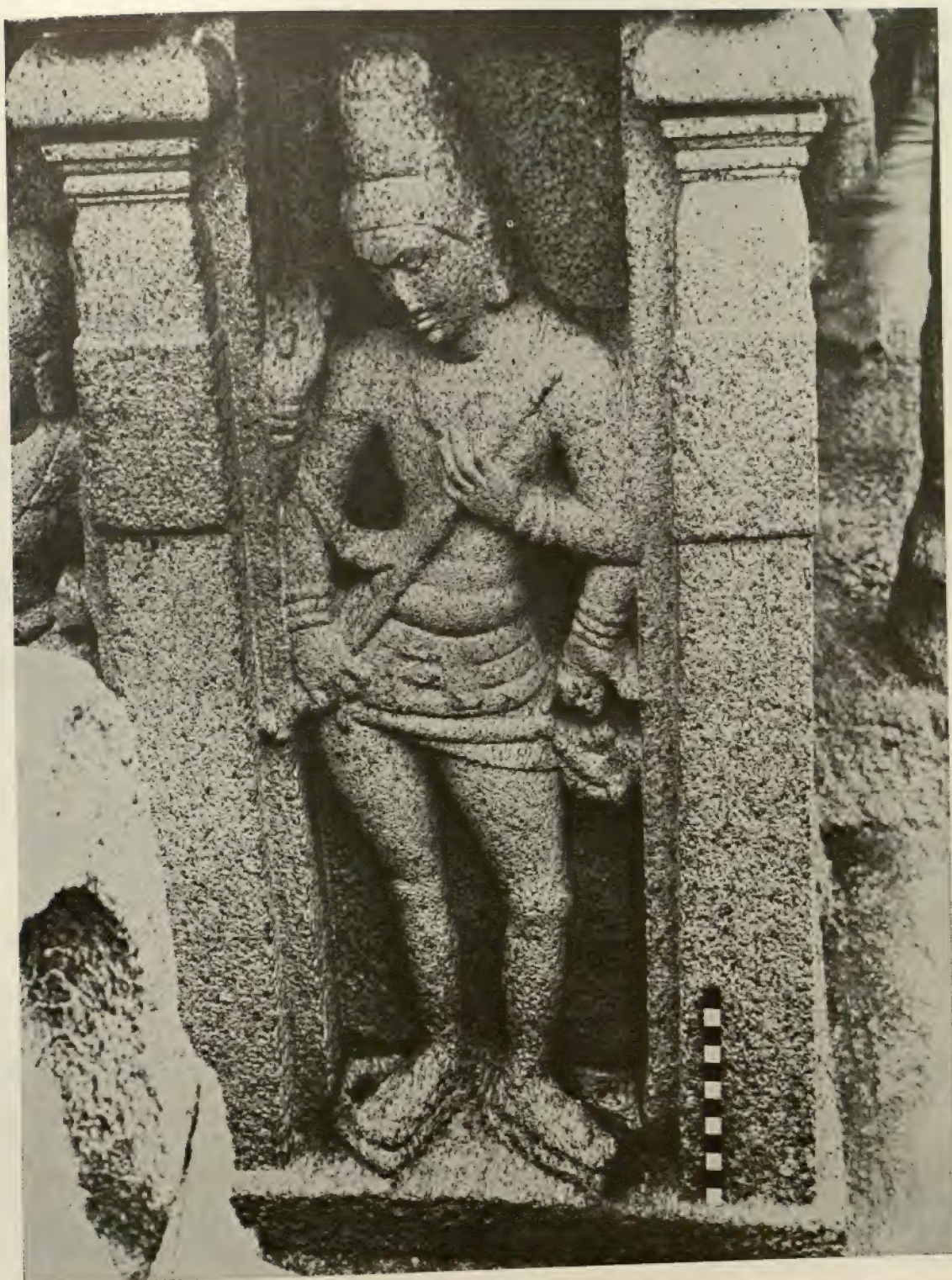


FIG. 40. Śiva as Viṇādhara on vimāna, 7th century A.D., Pallava, Dharmarājaraṭha, Mahabalipuram.

of the story of Śiva teaching Nandī and Taṇḍu (p. 116, Fig. 14,15).

Abhinavagupta, in his commentary *Abhinavabhāratī* on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, mentions Taṇḍu and Bharata as sages—*taṇḍubharatau munivāchakau*; and Taṇḍu is shown here as a sage. These sculptures are of the seventh century.

In this context, it is not clear whether in another panel here, the young sage listening to Śiva, who affectionately has a hand on his shoulder, is Chanḍeśa, whom Śiva blesses in

the Chanḍeśānugraha form, or Bharata initiated into *nāṭyaveda* by Śiva himself.

In the eighth century temple of Śiva, named after the king Rājasimheśvara, there is a series of sculptures of which quite a large number are representations of Śiva's dance. One of them is in the *ūrdhvajānu* pose (Fig. 42). The principal hands and the disposition of the legs suggest the normal *ūrdhvajānu* of any dancer, while among the additional hands, there is one in *rechita* extended upwards, another is *añchita*, while the third is almost approaching *kaṭistha* (the hand



FIG. 41. Śiva as Viṇādhara on first tier of vimāna, Dharmarājāratha, Pallava, mid 7th century A.D., Mahābalīpuram.

known as *nitamba* in motion of *vichita*). Since Śiva has eight arms here, he is holding a Nāga in two of his hands as is usual in other north Indian sculptures. The *nāga* has an umbrella of hoods around his head. Here, this mighty snake who is a Nāgarāja, is shown in therianthropomorphic form, the human part of it showing a devout figure with hands in *añjali*, the snake hoods over the head announcing him a mighty snake, like Śeṣha or Takshaka. The main hands of Śiva in *karihasta* and *abhaya* are characteristic of his protection and grace. Close to him stands

Pārvatī, enjoying a look at the dance. At his foot, there is a dwarf *gana*, dancing in great glee.

In another niche, Śiva's dance is in *ālīḍha* (Fig. 43). Though generally Śiva in *ālīḍha* is shown almost always standing, in all Pallava representations of the Rājasimha period, Tripurāntaka Śiva's dance in the *ālīḍha* pose is almost sitting like this. The legs are nearly as in *kuñchita*, though the hands show the *gajahasta*, one thrown up in *rechita*, and another suggesting



FIG. 42. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu, late 7th century A.D., Pallava, Kailāsa temple, Kāñchipuram.

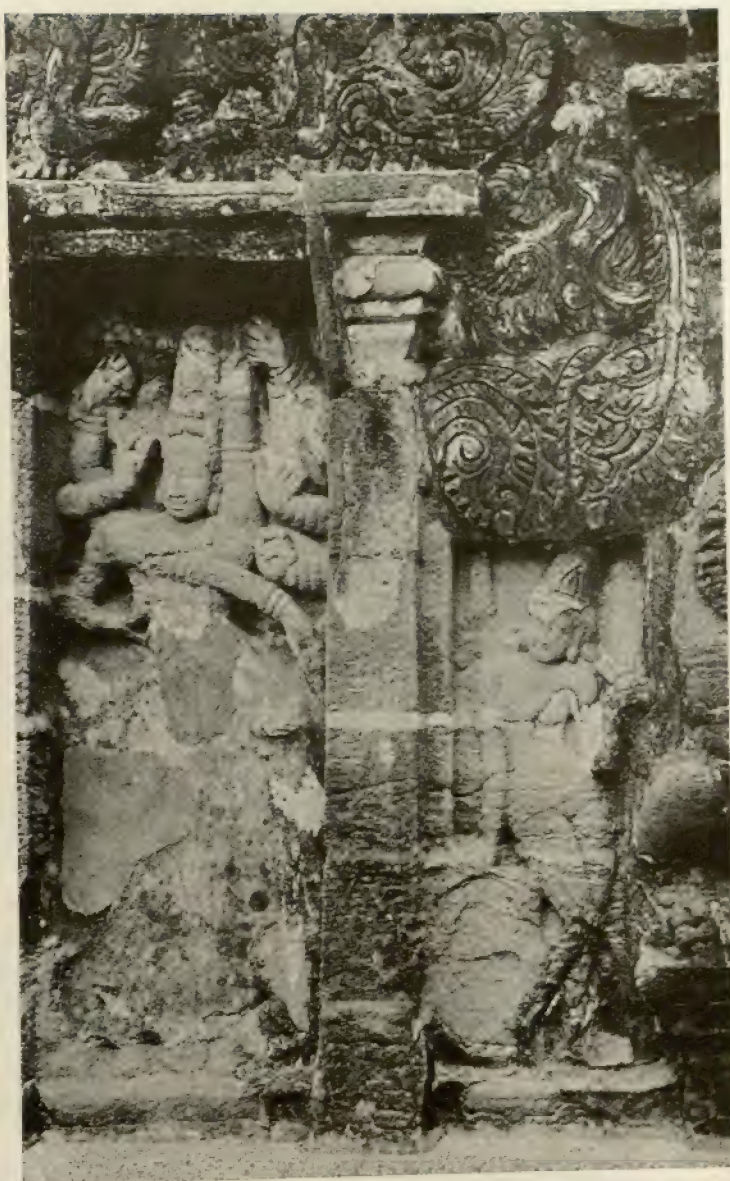


FIG. 44. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu, late 7th century A.D., Pallava, Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchipuram.



patāka. In another panel, multi-armed Śiva is presented in the regular *ālīḍha* position, with his hands in different positions, including the *gajahasta*, *ardhachandra*, *khaṭakāmukha*, *ārdhapatāka* and so forth. Dancing and watching Śivagaṇas are at his feet.

In another niche Śiva is shown with only four hands dancing in *ūrdhvajānu* on Apasmāra (Fig. 44), holding the *triśūla* and *pāśa*, with a hand in *sūchī* and the other in *alapadma*. *Sūchī* is to terrify and *alapadma* is to suggest the wonder of his triumph. There is a forceful laughter expressed in his face, recalling Kālidāsa's remark: *rāśībhuṭaḥ pratidinam iva tryambakasyāṭṭahāsaḥ*. Apasmāra is unusually large in size.

Yet another niche presents Śiva dancing in the *lalāṭatilaka* pose, with two of his hands in *abhaya* and one in *ardhapatāka*, while the rest carry



FIG. 45. Śiva dancing in lālāṭatilaka pose, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.

attributes (Fig. 45). To his left is Nandikeśvara, dancing with the legs crossed in *pādasvastika*, in a stance approaching *lalita*. A Śivagaṇa is also dancing to the right. The lower portion is very much worn, and unfortunately, the flutist and other musicians in the panel below are nearly lost. In small niches flanking the principal figure of dancing Śiva, there are Brahmā to the right and Viṣṇu to the left, in the company of other gods, watching and appreciating Śiva's *tāṇḍava*.

The *ālīḍhanṛtta* of Śiva in seated form is repeated in another niche (Fig. 46). His right hand across the chest is in *karihasta*, while the main left is raised up to touch the top of his *jaṭā-makuṭa*. His hands hold a drum, *triśūla*, the *paraśu* and *khaṭvāṅga*, while the three free hands

are in *ardhachandra*, or *abhaya*, *śimhakarṇa* and *ardhapatāka*. He dances on a *padmāsana*, while below in a niche, three Śivagaṇas are delineated like cherubs, joyously dancing. In the smaller niches on either side, flanking the main figure, there are the musicians, the flutist Gaṇa, the Gaṇa sounding the cymbals at the foot of Nandikeśvara or Taṇḍu playing the *ūrdhva-mṛidaṅga*. From behind, there are more of Śivagaṇas watching the dance. In the niche to the left, Nandī is seated at ease listening to the music, while Pārvatī stands in elegant pose, with her face turned towards Śiva, watching his magnificent dance. Close to her are her mates.

Lālāṭatilaka is found again carved in another niche (Fig. 47). Śiva is ten-armed with his right leg thrown up. His main right arm is in *abhaya*



FIG. 46. Śiva dancing in ālīḍha, late 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.

while the main left is raised up to touch his crest. He carries attributes like the multi-hooded snake, trident, noose, axe and drum. One of his right arms is in *abhaya* while the corresponding left hand is in *vismaya*. Another is in *ardhachandra*. A Gaṇa at his feet to the right plays a *ghaṭa* (pot-drum), while another to the left sounds the flute. The *yajñopavīta*, composed of pearls, and with long tassels trailing gracefully down below his knee, runs over his right arm in true Pallava fashion. Devī gracefully stands to Śiva's left admiring his dance.

In another niche, the musical eminence of Śiva, as already illustrated in Mahābalipuram, is repeated in a Viṇādhara form (Fig. 48). Śiva plays the *viṇā* held against his chest and shoulder. Śiva himself is lost in the ecstasy of music, to which the Gaṇas to his left respond with enthusiastic sway of their body in dance.

In the inner cell to the right of the entrance, there is a niche on the wall showing the dance of Śiva in the *lalāṭatilaka* mode. The central large niche represents Śiva, his right foot lifted



FIG. 47. Śiva dancing in lalāṭatilaka, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.

up, almost touched by the raised left hand, the corresponding right hand being in *abhaya*. The other two hands to the right hold the drum and a staff, while of the others to the left, one is in *sūchī* while the other carries the flame. In the smaller niches flanking the main one, there are Brahmā and Viṣṇu adoring the dancing Lord.

The only Pallava painting that we know, representing Śiva's dance, is an almost obliterated mural in an outer cell of the Śiva temple at Panamalai (Fig. 49). It is a group, Śiva dancing and Devī watching the dance. It should have been a very beautiful painting when intact. Devī is better preserved than Śiva, though the damage here is also not inconsiderable. Devī stands at ease with her weight on the right leg, the left bent and resting against a support (Fig. 50, 72). Her right hand is almost resting on her shoulder, adjusting her braid decked with



FIG. 48. Śiva as Vīṇādhara inspiring Gaṇas to dance to his tune, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram.

flowers, along with which is a *maṭṭa*, gracefully fashioned in the Pallava mode. The pattern of the garment of Devī recalls similar painting from the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram, which is also Pallava. An umbrella is also held over her. The Gaṇas and other attendants, who should have been shown around the principal figures, are now lost.

The dancing Śiva is multi-armed. He has a right arm in *gajahasta* and other arms in different attitudes, one of them thrown up. Unfortunately, most of the figure is lost and indistinct. The right hand in *karihasta* is possibly in different *karāṇas*, like *añchita* and *lalita*. Since the painting is not well preserved and the legs are lost, it is too much to infer what *karāṇa* it could have been, though in all probability it is *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, but what little remains suggests how beautifully the painter



FIG. 49. The faint outline of multi-armed Śiva dancing in *lalāṭatilaka* from small side shrine of Śiva temple, Pallava, 7th century A.D., Panamalai.

has succeeded in portraying the movement of human form.

The Kālāntaka image in the Kailāsanātha temple follows the type of dancing Śiva and creates a tradition later followed in representations of this form at Koḍumbāḷur, Tañjāvūr, Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram and other places. In this case it is nearer *ūrdhvajānu* than any other. Kāla, who is shown fallen at Śiva's feet and almost trampled, is very much like a large-

sized Apasmāra. Śiva is multi-armed, but the one significant hand here shows *tarjanī*, and that determines the figure of Kālāntaka (Fig. 51).

Among the late Pallava temples, in the Kailāsanātha temple from Tiruppattūr in the Tiruchirāpalli district, is a fine Naṭarāja in action, dancing in the *lalita* pose. Śiva is eight-armed, carries the goad, small drum and the trident. All of his hands are *ardhapatāka*, one in



FIG. 50. Painting of Devī under umbrella standing watching Śiva's dance, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Panamalai.

vismaya and another in *daṇḍahasta*. His face, thrown up, suggests his ecstasy in dance. He is flanked by musical Gaṇas.

The most important bronze of the Pallava period, representing Śiva dancing, is undoubtedly the small one from Kūram depicting Śiva dancing in the *ūrdhvajānu* pose (Fig. 52). This Naṭarāja is four-armed, carries the drum and the snake, the other two hands being in *karihasta* and *abhaya*. The left foot is raised and

bent to form *ūrdhvajānu*. In this case, as in the Nallūr Naṭarāja, Apasmāra is shown facing the spectator. While Apasmāra here looks crushed, he bears lightly the weight of the dancing Śiva in the Nallūr bronze. The moulding of the *jaṭās*, including the few simple ones shown hanging about the shoulders and the back, the simple lotus-shaped *śiraśchakra* and the waist loops, all bespeak an early date for this Pallava image.

The other one from Nallūr (Fig. 53) is also a



FIG. 51. Śiva dancing as Kālāntaka, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchipuram.

very important one. Śiva dances here against a *prabhā* of flames. There are eight arms provided for Natarāja here and he carries various attributes, including the fire, drum and a three-hooded snake, exquisitely moulded, and in every way it is a very graceful piece. The simple arrangement of the *jaṭās*, the *śiraśchakra* and the hanging *jaṭās* to the back, all indicate an early date.

An early image of great beauty, from the Virūpākshīśvara temple in Kīlakkāḍu from Pāpanāśam taluq, represents Śiva's dance in *ardharechita* (Fig. 54). It is a unique example of this type. The left hand is raised in glee in *rechita* and the right hand, which had been in *sūchīmukha*, has just the pointing finger approaching the thumb, to almost create *saṁdamśa*, calling attention to the aspect of Śiva as the supreme master of the great science of *nāṭya*. The dwarf here, as in the case of another

uncommon sculpture in metal from Nallūr, represents Apasmāra sitting up and supporting the dance figure on his lifted up hands and head in true caryatid form. This is indeed a remarkable masterpiece. On the back of this, the *jaṭās* represent the early type with all other associated traits as we know from other important examples. The *yajñōpavīta* flowing over the right arm and the special clasp, the simple necklace, the *ananta* armlet, as well as the oval face and the peculiar arrangement of the *jaṭās*, all bespeak the Pallava date of this image, which has the contours composing the form in true Pallava fashion.

Early Pāṇḍya

In the cave temple at Tirumalaipuram (Fig. 55), which is among the earliest of its kind in the Pāṇḍyan era, the main wall has three *niches*, in one of which is shown Natarāja dancing in the *chatura* pose, with his head slightly tilted to the left, in the direction of his uplifted upper left hand. His upper right hand holds the *damaru*, while the other right hand is in the *mṛigaśirsha* attitude, with his legs slightly bent, and body in motion, which suggests *ardhamattalli karaṇa*. The heavy waist loop, *yajñōpavīta*, the armlets, the necklace, the heavy *patra-kunḍala* ear-rings, *udarabandha* and the elaborate arrangement of the *jaṭās*, with double *makara* decoration, all recall Pallava figures of Śiva. He is flanked by two dwarf Gaṇas, one of whom plays a *chāṇḍāla-vallakī*, a primitive musical instrument, though somewhat resembling the *viṇā*.

At Tirupparamkunram, in the vicinity of Madurai, is another Pāṇḍyan cave, where, in two panels, flanked by pilasters, there is a fine carving of Śiva dancing in one panel (Fig. 57), while in the other (Fig. 56), there is the orchestra to keep time, and Pārvaṭī, Nandī, Śivagaṇas and other Devas watch the dance. Śiva is shown dancing on the back of the dwarf Apasmāra, who groans under his weight. Śiva has only four hands, not the *bhujataruvana* (a forest of arms), as in northern sculptures. The right hand of Śiva, usually in *abhaya*, is here in *āhūyavarada*, and the left is in *karihasta*. In the other hands, he holds the fire and a long staff with a bull on top, his well-known *vṛishabhadhvaja*. While the bull on the staff at Paṭṭaḍakal is seated, here it is a standing one. His *jaṭās* are elaborately dressed in an imposing *maṭṭa*. There are heavy ear-rings on the lobes. The necklace, armlets,



FIG. 52. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu, Pallava, early 9th century A.D., Kūram, Madras Museum.

yajñopavīta and *kaṭisūtra* are all in the early style. There is a central tassel, apart from the loop on the waist. The ornaments on his feet suggest *nūpuraśiñjita*, resounding anklets in dance.

In the adjacent panel, in continuation of this dance scene is depicted a drummer, playing the *ūrdhvaka* drum. This is obviously Nandī or Taṇḍu. The large *jaṭābhāra* composed of ringlets, resting on both shoulders with the coronet above, and the general disposition of ornaments

like the *patrakuṇḍala*, *yajñopavīta*, *keyūras*, suggest similar treatment of *Dvārapālas* in other early cave temples. One of them is Nandī. Seated close to him are two dwarf Śiva-*gaṇas*, one playing the flute and the other keeping time. There are other *gaṇas* peeping from behind the central pilasters, their hands clasped in adoration. Calm and quiet stands the bull Nandī in rapt attention, for is it not said that even animals and children and even a serpent appreciate music: *paśurvetti śīśurvetti vetti gāna-rasam phaṇī* ?



FIG. 53. Multi-armed Śiva dancing on *Apasmāra*, Pallava, early 9th century A.D., Nallūr.

Pārvatī watches the dance of her lord in admiration, resting her hand on the head of her dwarf attendant *vāmanikā*. She holds a lily in her left hand. As in all early sculptures, Pārvatī's crown is a simple, diminutive one. Her ornaments, like the anklets, *yajñopavīta*, *kaṭisūtra*, *aṅgada* and *nūpura*, the under-garment arranged with the *nivibandha* and the folds of the knot hanging loosely over the *kaṭisūtra*, along with other tassels and folds of her dress,

remind us of Śrī Lakshmī at Mahābalipuram in the Varāha cave, and the Princess at her toilet in the Ajaṇṭā painting. Beyond the clouds above are three Devas watching the dance of Śiva, four-faced Brahmā keeping time, Viṣṇu holding *śaṅkha* and *chakra* prominently, and Indra.

A wall built in recent times separates another panel with a Śiva group. Here is a



FIG. 56. Dancing Śiva, Pulina, 3rd century A.D., Virupakṣiteśvara temple, Ellorā.

standing Nandī in human form, with bovine head, with some fishis. It is a glorification of *nṛṇya* and Nandikeśvara's exposition of it. As similar carvings on the rock are plastered over, it is difficult to understand the full concept of the artist.

In yet another cave at Śevilipatti, there is a very simple representation of Śiva (Fig. 58), almost as simple as the figure at Tirumalai-puram, showing the peculiar arrangement of the hair as *jaṭābhāra*. *Jaṭābhāra*, as we usually know, is for Dakṣiṇāmūrti, and this almost suggests that Śiva as Naṭarāja is like Viprādakṣiṇāmūrti, Nāṭya-dakṣiṇāmūrti expounding the art of dance. We know that

Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* clearly lays it down that it was only Śiva who could perform *lāṭya*, in addition to his own masculine *tāṇḍava*. It is only because the others were incapable of *lāṭya* like Śiva, with ease, grace and charm, that Apsarases had to be specially created for this delicate dance, specially suitable for feminine action.

When this is compared with the Dakṣiṇāmūrti at Kaḷugumalai (Fig. 60), on the top of the *cināna*, seated with his left foot resting on Apasmāra and the right leg bent, wearing a fine *jaṭābhāra*, made of *bhramaraka* ringlets of hair, arranged like a *maṇḍala*, from which his face peeps out in an ecstatic smile, playing the



FIG. 55. Four-armed *śiva* dancing, carved from cave temple, early Pandya, 5th century A.D.,
Tirumalaipuram, Tirumalai.

mridaṅga of the *aśṭya* type which rests on his lap, a strap running over his shoulder to hold it in position, the musical and dance aspects of *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, that come so close together and justify common attributes, like the *jaṭābhāra*, become clear. He holds the drum with his left hand as the fingers of the right softly play on it. The upper hands hold the *paraṇa* and the *akṣhamālā*. This is a unique feature in *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. Normally, *Śiva* is the lord of music and carries the *vīṇā*. This is a singular instance of *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* playing

the *mridaṅga*, the drum, not the *vīṇā*. The *mridaṅga* is associated with dance. So *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* here is not only the lord of music, but also of dance. This is probably the only instance of *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* as *Pushkara-dakṣiṇāmūrti*, playing the *pushkara* or the *mridaṅga*, as he plays on the *vīṇā*.

The *jaṭābhāra* of *Natarāja*, on the eastern wall of the *ardhamandapa* of the cave temple at *Sevilipatti* in *Rāmanāthapuram* district, suggests this feature of *Śiva* as *Nāṭya Dakṣi-*



FIG. 54. Dancing Śiva, Pallava, 9th century A.D., Virūpākṣhīśvara temple, Kilakkāṇḍu.

standing Nandī in human form, with bovine head, with some ṛishis. It is a glorification of *nāṭya* and Nandikeśvara's exposition of it. As similar carvings on the rock are plastered over, it is difficult to understand the full concept of the artist.

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Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* clearly lays it down that it was only Śiva who could perform *lāsya*, in addition to his own masculine *tāṇḍava*. It is only because the others were incapable of *lāsya* like Śiva, with ease, grace and charm, that Apsarases had to be specially created for this delicate dance, specially suitable for feminine action.

When this is compared with the Dakṣiṇāmūrti at Kaḷugumalai (Fig. 60), on the top of the *vimāna*, seated with his left foot resting on Apasmāra and the right leg bent, wearing a fine *jaṭābhāra*, made of *bhramaraka* ringlets of hair, arranged like a *maṇḍala*, from which his face peeps out in an ecstatic smile, playing the



FIG. 55. Four-armed Śiva dancing, carving from cave temple, early Pāṇḍya, 7th century A.D., Tirumalaipuram, Tirunelveli.

mṛidaṅga of the *aṅkya* type which rests on his lap, a strap running over his shoulder to hold it in position, the musical and dance aspects of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, that come so close together and justify common attributes, like the *jaṭābhāra*, become clear. He holds the drum with his left hand as the fingers of the right softly play on it. The upper hands hold the *paraśu* and the *akṣhamālā*. This is a unique feature in Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Normally, Śiva is the lord of music and carries the *viṇā*. This is a singular instance of Dakṣiṇāmūrti playing

the *mṛidaṅga*, the drum, not the *viṇā*. The *mṛidaṅga* is associated with dance. So Dakṣiṇāmūrti here is not only the lord of music, but also of dance. This is probably the only instance of Dakṣiṇāmūrti as Pushkara-dakṣiṇāmūrti, playing the *pushkara* or the *mṛidaṅga*, as he plays on the *viṇā*.

The *jaṭābhāra* of Nāṭarāja, on the eastern wall of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* of the cave temple at Śevilipaṭṭi in Rāmanāthapuram district, suggests this feature of Śiva as Nāṭya Dakṣi-



FIG. 56. *Devī and celestials watching Śiva dancing to the accompaniment of music, Early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Tirupparamkunram.*

nāmūrti, like Viṇā Dakṣiṇāmūrti. His legs are crossed in *pādasvastika*. The left hand assures *abhaya* while the right is in abandon. It is almost in *ardhamattalli*. The other two hands hold the drum and the fire, the latter in a receptacle. There are anklets on the legs to suggest the rhythm of the time beat. The large circular ear-ring, to the left, with the other lobe free, recalls at once the *ardhanārīśvara* in him. The elimination of jewellery and of excess of



FIG. 57. *Four-armed Śiva dancing in lalita, Early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Tirupparamkunram.*

dress and ornamentation in this particular form, to make it a very simple one, suggests *āṅgika* and *sātvika abhinaya* as the principal expression in this dance, avoiding *āhārya*.

In the cave temple at Kunnakuḍi, in Rāmanāthapuram district, there is another interesting early Pāṇḍyan sculpture of Śiva's dance, unfortunately, somewhat plastered over. The original carving is covered up but the form can



FIG. 58. *Śiva dancing, early Pāṇḍya, 9th century A.D., Śevilipattī.*

easily be judged, even from what is seen in this plaster-covered figure. There are eight hands. The principal right hand shows the *sūchī* while the principal left is thrown in glee in *ardhamattalli*. He holds in the other hands the axe, the drum and a *khaṭvāṅga*, snake, fire and probably a mirror. The prominent circular ear-ring on the right ear with the left lobe free, suggests again the eternal *ardhanārīśvara*. There is ecstasy in his face, as well as in the countenance of the two Gaṇas that flank him, one playing the *ūrdhvaka* drum and the other cymbals. The legs crossed show the *pādasvastika*. The *jaṭā* swirling around the *mayūrapuchccha*

(peacock feathers) on the head and the flaming arch all around may or may not be part of the original carving below the plaster, but the sculpture is a very vigorous one (Fig. 59).

Somewhat later in date, but a rare one, representing the *lalita* mode of dance from the Pāṇḍyan country is the Naṭarāja with an elaborate *prabhāvali* from the Koḍumuḍi temple in the Coimbatore district (Fig. 87). The *jaṭā* is very elaborate. Both the ear lobes are free. The main right hand is in *abhaya* and the left in *karihasta*, while the other hands hold the drum and a vessel with the flame. A snake coiled around



FIG. 59. Multi-armed Śiva dancing with legs crossed in pādasvastika from rock-cut cave, early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Kunnakuḍi.

the right arm elegantly raises its hood. The loop of the *kaṭisūtra*, as a narrowed arch, suggests a stage in the development of the form in the Chola period. There are dancing figures in *ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha*, on the arch itself, which is most interesting. The *jaṭā* is very elaborate. The shoulder tassels are only to the right. The *yajñōpavīta* also suggests an early date. It is early Chola, but, with Pāṇḍyan characteristics, as it hails from the Pāṇḍyan territory. This is the continuity of the Pāṇḍyan tradition. The Naṭarāja from Kumāravāyalūr, also in *lalita*, comes very close to this.

Śiva from the Tiruvāliśvara temple at Tirunelveli district is Naṭarāja of the normal type, except for the *jaṭābhāra* and it is in pure early Chola tradition (Fig. 96). The *jaṭābhāra* is interesting as it again shows the continuous reckoning of Śiva as the dance master, as

Dakṣiṇāmūrti of dance (*nāṭya*), through the hairdress, always associated with Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

One of the earliest Pāṇḍyan paintings from Śittannavāsal, which is to be dated in the ninth century A.D. is a magnificent representation of Śiva's dance mode standardised in the type of Tillai and Taṇjāvūr, with the *karihasta* and the *abhaya* in the *bhujāṅga* type.

As important as the Tiruvālaṅgādu Naṭarāja himself is the magnificent Naṭarāja from Porupumettupatti in Pāṇḍyan territory (Fig. 61, 62). Even the *pīṭha* here is elaborately worked, with the lion and *yālī* motif freely used as decoration. The Apasmāra here is a very fat and large dwarf, playing with the snake, unconcerned with the weight thumping his back. Naṭarāja has his right leg raised, an unusual feature associated



FIG. 60. Śiva as Dakṣiṇāmūrti playing rhythmic beat of mṛdaṅga, Early Pāṇḍya, 8th century A.D., Kaḷugumalai.

with the *Rajatasabhā* silver hall, at Madurai, the capital of the Pāṇḍyas. This belongs to the early Choḷa period, about 1000 A.D. and is in the best tradition of Choḷa work, though with the right foot raised and without *prabhā*. This is more to respect the Pāṇḍyan tradition in their territory. In the different *karaṇas*, the *chārī* of the foot allows lifting up of either foot. The drum and fire are also reversed, though the hand of reassurance and the pointer to the raised foot as refuge, remain normal. The *jaṭās* are very happily worked and the swaying ones are kept also to the minimum length, to make the figure itself look more attractive.

Early Chera

In the early Chera cave temples, which closely resemble the Pallava and the Pāṇḍyan ones, the sculptural form and poise is very close to the early type in the rest of South India. In

a cave at Viḷiṇḅam near Trivandrum, there are carved figures on either side of the entrance. This is typical work of the eighth century (Fig. 63) from the Chera territory and resembles closely Pallava carvings in and around North Arcot and Chingleput districts. One of them shows Tripurāntaka, Śiva as the destroyer of the Tripuras, Tārakāksha, Vidyunmālī and Kama-lāksha, with the bow and arrow in his principal hands, resting his left foot on a dwarf Gaṇa, the most striking of the eight varieties of this theme, of which a later magnificent bronze of the Rājārāja period is famous. The other one is a group showing Śiva dancing in the *chatura* pose, Pārvatī watching him with the utmost admiration (Fig. 64).

The special choice of these two forms is to interconnect Tripurāntaka with Naṭarāja, as Śiva danced a dance of *Tripurasamhāra* in

ālīḍha, the most heroic of stances, particularly associated with the triumph of Śiva in this warrior pose. Trivikrama's great triumph, with his left leg lifted up, is, on the other hand, in the *vishṇukrānta* pose, which indicates his encompassing the three worlds. *Ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha* alone could convey the warrior's triumph. This is exactly the reason why *ālīḍha* is chosen for Varāha, when he lifts the earth from the ocean and the nether world, after his triumph over Hiraṇyāksha.

The particular form of Tripurāntaka, resting his leg on a dwarf, is as much as to suggest the association of Apasmāra, trampled under foot by Śiva in his dancing attitude at Tillai, where the heretic Ṛishis created Apasmārapurusha, whom Śiva crushed under his foot. The dance tradition of Malabar is very famous for its *tāṇḍava* element, as this vigorous mode is more prominent in *Kathakalī*. This early representation of Śiva as the dancer is, indeed, most interesting and is the precursor of the very much later Nāṭarāja form in sculpture and painting in the temples of Malabar. Of this the large painting from Ettumānūr is very famous as a sixteenth century mural.

In accordance with South Indian traditions, Śiva as a dancer is here shown with Devī as Śivakāmasundarī beside him. He is four-armed. This panel, though unfinished, is a very lovely one. Devī's pose and disposition of the legs is so arranged that it immediately recalls similar playful movement of the princess in the famous panel, 'princess' toilet', from Ajantā, or the *apsaras* in the Gajalakshmi panel at Mahābalipuram, both of which follow the earlier pattern occurring at Amarāvati. The continuity of tradition in this is most interesting and noteworthy. This sculpture of the eighth century is very important in the study of the earliest representation of Nāṭeśa in South India. At Tirunandikkarai, where the entire cave was painted all over, there are only a few fragments today to give us an idea of the art treasures which are now lost for ever. To the right of the doorway of the cell shrine are the remnants of a Gaṇeśa and to the left what should have been once a lovely Skanda. Of the next panel of Mahishāsūramardini on the main wall, the lion head is well preserved, though the rest is almost completely lost. Beyond this was the representation of a Dakṣiṇāmūrti, suggested as Lakulīśa with a *daṇḍa* in his hand. The panel on the wall, beside the main cell, across the *maṇḍapa*, shows an ecstatic Gaṇa waving

his hands amidst clouds. At the other end of this panel is the head of a *mahāpurusha*, probably Viṣṇu. The remnants of a *jaṭāmakuṭa* in between suggest that it should have been in all probability Śiva, dancing Śiva.

The reason for this is not far to seek. There has been a continuous tradition in the depiction of Śiva's dance in Kerala, Brahmā keeping time with cymbals, Viṣṇu sounding the drum, Indra playing the flute and Devī watching the dance, along with the bull. In all these cases, generally, Śiva, shown with four arms or multi-armed, carries a *nandīdhvaja* in addition to his other attributes. The beginning of this tradition can very well be seen in the Pāṇḍyan area itself, where a very early panel from the Tirupparaṅkunram cave shows him four-armed, carrying the *nandīdhvaja*, gazed at by celestials, amidst clouds on one side and Devī watching the dance with the Nandī bull beside her. It is undoubtedly very interesting to find that the Pāṇḍyan traditions, which found great favour in the Kerala territory, are continued even in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century panels in temples. The *nandīdhvaja* itself occurs in the early Western Chāḷukya temple of Vikramāditya and his queen Trailokyamahādevī at Paṭṭadakal. Śiva is four-armed but he carries the *nandīdhvaja*. This tradition has travelled through the Pāṇḍyan area to Kerala, and not a painting in any of the temples goes without the *nandīdhvaja*. The multiarmed feature from the Chāḷukyan area is ever present in all the late sculptures and paintings in Kerala. In the paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the usual orchestral accompaniment follows the *pradoshastava*, viz. Viṣṇu as the drummer, Brahmā keeping time, Indra as flutist and so forth. It is probably this whole arrangement which should have composed the panel of which we have only fragments at Tirunandikkarai.

Noḷamba

The Noḷambas continued the tradition of the early Western Chāḷukyas, but with a special charm of their own in this style of work, and have created some fine examples of dancing Śiva at Hemāvati, their capital, where their temples abound. This is typical ninth century work.

A fine example of Nāṭarāja dancing, in the *prishṭhasvastika* attitude, is now preserved in the Madras Museum (Fig. 65). The face is lit up with an ecstatic smile. The *jaṭā* is elaborately



FIG. 61. Śiva dancing with the right leg raised, early Pāṇḍya, 10th century A.D., Porupumēṭṭupāṭṭi, Madurai Distt.
This is a fine representation of Śiva's dance in reversed pose in the rajatasabhā at Madurai.

arranged and ornamented. The *muktāyajñōpavīta* has an additional single strand, almost dropping straight from near the *granthi* (knot), which is flower-decorated. A semi-circular gem-set necklet has pendant pearl tassels at intervals. The *keyūras* (bracelets) are the *ananta* type, the *udarabandha* is gem-set. There are *kuṇḍalas* on the ears. The *kaṭisūtra* is elaborate and the *uttariya* is tied over the waist to form semi-circular loops. There are *pādasaras* on the feet to resonate and keep time with the footfall.

It is a lovely scheme of decoration, characteristic of this school. The six hands in different attitudes carrying the *śūla*, *kapāla*, *akṣamālā*, *nāga* and so forth, follow the northern tradition of *bhujataruvana*, while the Apasmāra dwarf, trampled under foot, clearly proclaims the southern tradition. Two Gaṇas flank the dancing form. Seated on either side, one plays the *ūrdhvaka* drum, while the other sounds the cymbals. It is somewhat amusing to see how Apasmāra, unaware of the weight crushing



FIG. 62. Another view of the same dancing Śiva.

him, plays with the *nāga* (snake) he is holding, both listening to the music and watching the dance with rapt attention recalling the parable of their appreciation of music.

On another beautiful pillar from Hemāvati, richly carved on all the four sides, also preserved in the Madras Museum, there is a narration of the significance of Śiva's dance. In two panels, the border of which is formed by thick twirled rolls of pearls, is a single theme,

the dance of Naṭarāja. In one of the panels, Śiva dances, multi-armed, in the *chatura* pose, on Apasmāra. In the other panel is the musical orchestra. Two musicians figure prominently, one playing the triple drum and the other cymbals. The commingling of the northern and southern traditions in the feature of the multiplicity of arms and the dwarf under foot, is significant. Above the panels, a long band with a meandering creeper forms three circular panels, with *mithunas* in two of them, with the

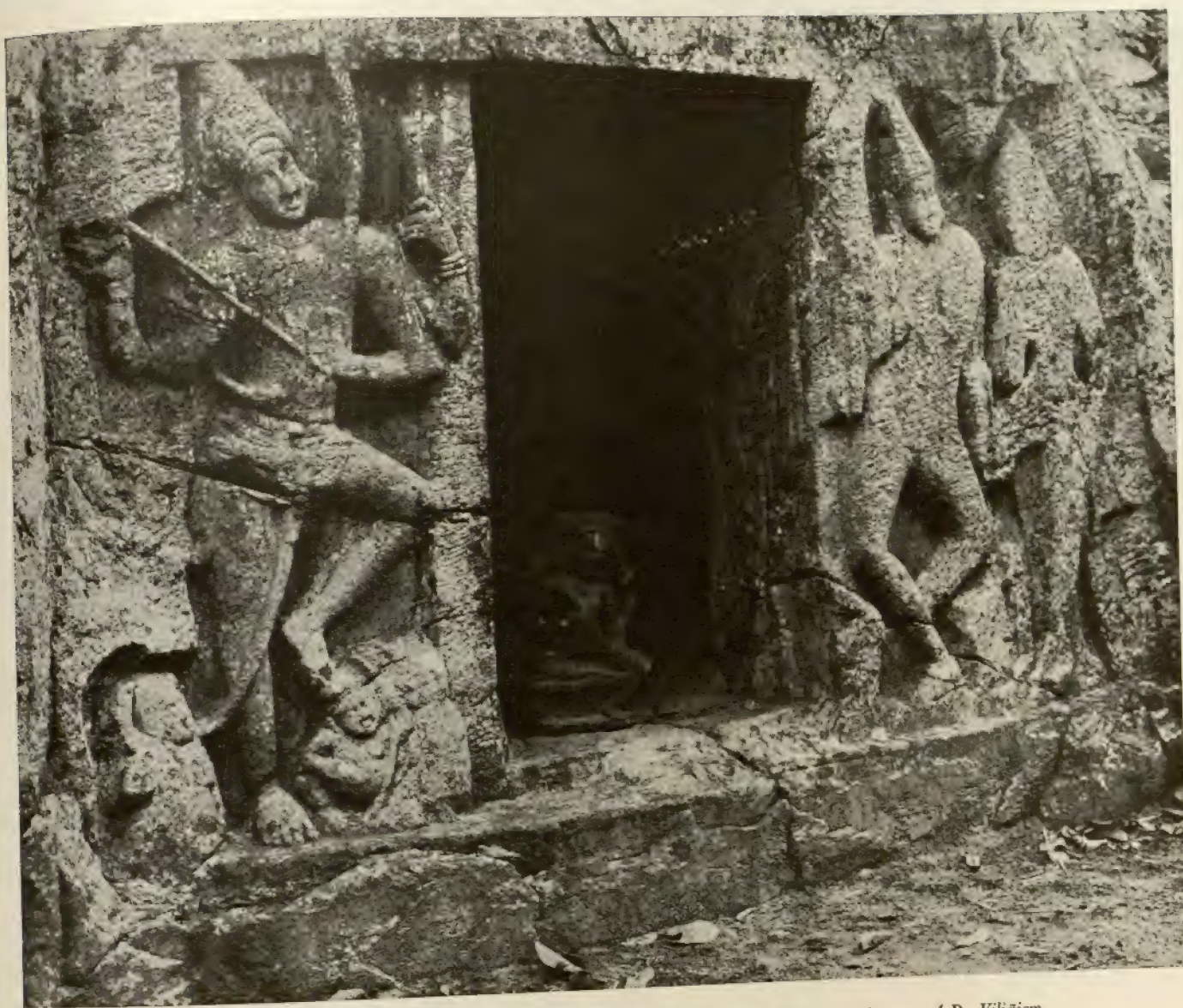


FIG. 63. Façade of the cave showing *Triṣurāntaka* and dancing Śiva and Devī, Early Chera, 8th-9th century A.D., Viññam.

third showing *Apasmāra* trampled by Śiva, as *Somāskanda*, from the panel above. *Apasmāra* under the foot of Śiva as *Somāskanda* is very rare, and the *mithuna* in close embrace in the two circular panels, suggest *śṛīṅgāra*. *Apasmāra* here links the sculpture above with the dance figures below. It is as much as to suggest that the dance itself is significantly connoting *śṛīṅgāra*, the culmination of which is *dharmaprajā—prajāyai gṛihamedhinām*. Though all the *rasas*, *śṛīṅgāra*, *hāsyā*, *karuṇā*, *vīra*, *raudra*, *bhayānaka*, *adbhuta* and *bībhatsa*, could be portrayed in dance, *śṛīṅgāra* has the first place and appeal. This idea is almost conveyed in this.

A seated *Viñādhara* from *Hemāvati*, with the *viñā* broken and lost, also in the Madras Museum, is from a group of *saptamātrikās* which should have been flanked by this and *Gaṇeśa*. Apart from the usual ornamentation which is typical, and the *kumbha* pattern of ear ornaments on the lobes, and *yajñopavīta* composed of a strip of cloth—the *vastra* type usually pres-

cribed for *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, there are flowers on the *jaṭās*, suggesting *kusumasekhara*, an indication of aesthetic taste. Of the two hands free for holding attributes in which are noticed the *śūla* and *ḍamaru*, while the other two hold the *viñā*, the one with the drum calls for some attention, specially as the face is ecstatic and bent to the right, as if nodding and enjoying the music with approbation. Not only the stringed instrument but also the sound of percussion instrument, i.e. the drum again suggests the part played by *Kutapa*, or the musical orchestra accompanying dance, of which also Śiva is the master.

A pillar from *Hemāvati* (Fig. 66) shows an exquisite carving of eight-armed *Naṭarāja* in the *chatura* pose, dancing on *Apasmāra*, with *Bhūtagaṇas* on either side of him, one playing the drum and the other clanging the cymbals. On top there are two haloed *Vidyādhara*s, flying almost in a dance attitude. The main right hand is in *abhaya* and the corresponding



FIG. 64. Close up of Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundarī, Early Chera, 8th-9th century A.D., Viḷiñjam.

left in *karihasta*. As the arms are broken, the attributes are not very clear, except a rod which may be the handle of either a *khaṭvāṅga* or *nandidhvaja*.

Yet another very interesting frieze (Fig. 67) from Hemāvati, above a door lintel, is eight-armed Śiva in the centre dancing in the *ūrdhvajānu* pose, with Devī to his right, as Śivakāmasundarī witnessing the dance, with a number of Bhūtagaṇas around him, playing the drum, sounding the pipe, clanging large cymbals and patting the triple *ūrdhva* drum. The lords of the quarters, Dikpālas, are shown flanking the extreme ends. The vehicles of all these celestials are shown merrily jumping and frisking, almost dancing in consonance with Śiva's movements and the musical orchestra. The entire frieze is flanked by *makaras* with floriated tails and celestial riders on their neck as in the case of any *makaratoraṇa*. This is just in con-

sonance with the tradition of the Chāḷukya temples representing dancing Śiva centrally on the lintel of a Śiva temple.

An early sculpture from the Rāmeśvara temple at Narasamaṅgala in Mysore portrays Nalamba workmanship in the figure of a Viṇādhara seated, as the first sculpture of a Saptamātrikā group, technically called Virabhadra, but really the master of music. He carries the *viṇā* with the *tumba* or the resonator attached to it. He has a small drum in one of his four hands. The other hand carries the *triśūla*. The long and oval halo, pleasing style of *jaṭā* and the simple but effective ornamentation, with abundant pearl decoration in the Chāḷukyan style, as well as the general modelling of the figure itself, reveal Nalamba workmanship of the ninth century. The weapons are held in a natural way. He is seated on Nandi and, with his eye-brows slightly raised



FIG. 66. Eight-armed Natarāja on pillar, Nolamba, 9th-10th century A.D., from Hemāvati Temple.

FIG. 65. Śiva dancing in prishthasvastika, Nolamba, 9th century A.D., Hemāvati Museum, Madras.

and eyes half closed, enjoying the music he is creating. The close association of Natarāja and Viṇādhara is particularly interesting when we find that Natarāja himself carries occasionally the *viṇā* in his hands.

To the school of the Nolambas should be assigned the Natarāja dancing in *lalita*, on the south of the Bhoganandīśvara temple at Nandi in Kolār district. The main right hand is in *gajahasta*, while the left is in the blessing attitude. Śiva is here eight-armed. To the right, two other hands carry the drum, the *triśūla* and *pāśa*. There are similar attributes, including a *ghaṇṭā* to the left. The Apasmāra dwarf,

with his head on the ground itself, looks sideways, and seems to enjoy the thud on his back. Two Gaṇas, one of them a dwarf, are busy with musical instruments; one plays the *ūrdhvaka* drum, while the other sounds the cymbals.

Yet another from Āvaṇi in Kolār district is from the Lakshmaṇalingeśvara shrine in the Rāmalingeśvara temple. This is the normal type, with only four arms, and looks more Chōla than Chālukya, though from Chālukya territory. The right leg, somewhat raised, is creating the *ūrdhvajānu* attitude. As in the Kūram image of Natarāja, there is here the drum and the snake, the snake replacing the



FIG. 67. Temple door lintel with central figure of dancing Śiva flanked by Lokapālas also dancing, Nolamba, 9th century A.D., Hemāvati.



FIG. 68. Śiva dancing with a graceful twist in the body, from cave 14, Lankeśvara, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Ellora.

usual fire. He dances on Apasmāra, while his raised right foot almost rests on the head of a dwarf Gaṇa. Śiva is flanked by two Gaṇas, one of them a dwarf playing the *viṇā*, the other sounding the *ūrdhvaka* drum.

Rāshtrakūṭa

The Rāshtrakūṭa king, Kṛishṇarāja I, carved out of the living rock a magnificent temple, which is a great wonder of Indian architecture. There are here excellent carvings representing the sports of Śiva. On the upper storey of the Kailāsa, there is a figure of Śiva dancing with the back and hips twisted in a movement between *diksvastika* and *prishṭhasvastika* (Fig. 68). Four-armed, Śiva dances on a huge dwarf in the niche on the south façade of the central sanctuary (Fig. 69). Dr. Goetz attributes this to the

'Paṭṭadakal' style under Kṛishṇarāja. Actually the entire Kailāsa monument itself was inspired by the Paṭṭadakal temple, which, in its turn, simulates the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram. There is the southern touch, both at Paṭṭadakal and at Ellora; and we know from inscriptions that a distinguished southern architect built the Virūpāksha temple, patronised by Vikramāditya, the great Western Chālukya king, who, with his consort Trailokyamahādevī, could appreciate a good work of art and brought sculptors from Kāñchī after his triumph over the Pallavas. Kṛishṇa was equally art-minded and would not refrain from taking a leaf from the Chālukyas whom he overcame. The Naṭarāja here very closely resembles a similar dancing figure on a very large-sized dwarf. In the Lankeśvara temple,



FIG. 69. Śiva dancing on large-sized *Apasmāra*, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa, Ellora.

the twist in the body of Śiva, as he moves with great force, multi-armed, carrying a drum, a snake, and other indistinct attributes, makes him look even with his mutilated hands, arms and legs, the very picture of majesty in *tāṇḍava* dance. It is completely masculine, yet with a smile on his face that would almost recall feminine grace (Fig. 68). The *jaṭā* is magnificently decorated and pearl tassels dangle from it at intervals in small loops. Another figure is from the front screen to the right of the entrance of the Laṅkeśvara cave. This is an eight-armed Śiva, with the *jaṭās* arranged as a huge mass, with the head tilted and looking defiant, like Narasimha attacking Hiraṇyakaśipu, at the same place. He almost seems to play with his arms about, with all of them almost in *rechita*, the waist and hip twisted, the right shoulder raised to suggest action and forceful movement. Beside him to the right stands Devī, but what is most unusual is the presence of Gaṅgā as a complete personified goddess seated on his locks and playing with the snake on the *jaṭā* by handling it with wonder. Both in this and in



FIG. 70. Śiva dancing in *chatura* on *Apasmāra* as in cave 30, Cave 16, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Laṅkeśvara, Ellora.

the previous one Śiva shows a predilection for *pratyālīḍha*, instead of *ālīḍha*, also a warrior's pose. It is indeed the fascinating charm of such movement of limbs and beauty of gait in the case of Viṣṇu, as he attacked Madhu and Kaiṭabha, that created the *kaiśikīṛitti*. Is it not to be expected that Śiva, the *paramaguru* of dance, should also signify this in his charming deportment as a dancer?

From the same Laṅkeśvara cave, i.e. Cave 16, there is Gajāntaka, who is spreading out with his uplifted hands, the hide of the dead elephant, and trying to frighten the Bhūtagaṇas, who are themselves weird and terrifying in their looks. Devī is seated and watching the fun. Śiva rests his left foot on a lotus over the head of a Gaṇa. In this, as in one of the Tripurāntaka forms, Śiva's foot rests on a dwarf. This multi-armed *saṃhāra* aspect of Śiva also introduces the dances of destruction, whether after the annihilation of the Tripuras or of Andhakāśura or of Gajāśura. In fact, Śiva's dance commenced after his overcoming Gajāśura.



FIG. 71. Śiva playing ghaṭa, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Kailāsa temple, Ellora.

Again from Cave 16, is another sculpture showing Śiva with foot raised in *ūrdhvajānu* fashion. He is almost dropping down on one leg, the right one being raised.

Yet another, from the ceiling of the same cave, shows the dance of Śiva in *chatura*, with the main hands in *abhaya* and *gajahasta*, one in *rechita*, one fondly stroking the curls of Pārvatī's braid, as she stands close by, watching his dance. He carries the snake in yet another hand, while the last pair rests on his waist. Trampled under his foot is Apasmāra. In Cave 16, as also in Cave 30, there are two representations of Śiva's dance, almost in *ūrdhvajānu*, with his main hands in *karihasta* and *āhūyavarada*.

From the ceiling of the main hall of the Kailāsanātha temple, there is a dance of Śiva in *chatura*, the main hands being in *gajahasta* and *abhaya*, the other two carrying the *triśūla* and *ḍamaru*. Pārvatī stands to his right watching the dance. The background is a huge lotus, against the petals of which, the figures are carved. The background makes it all the more interesting. The lotus petals in a *maṇḍala* suggests the *maṇḍalachārī* of dancing Śiva.

There is another painting (Fig. 73) in the Kailāsa temple itself. In the *Nandī-maṇḍapa* there is an excellent example of mural in the Chālukya style showing multi-armed Śiva dancing in the reversed *bhujāṅgatrāsita* (scared by snake) pose. This is a favourite in Chālukya art, four-armed figures being rather rare, though common further south. The anatomy of the figure and ornamentation closely follow that of

all Chālukya sculptures, including such minute details as the one of the *jaṭā-makuṭa*, the elongated halo, the elaboration in decoration and so forth. Fortunately, it is well preserved. The *gaṇa*, with hands in *daṇḍahasta*, *abhaya*, a pan of fire, and other attributes, resembles what we normally see in other figures of dancing Śiva.

In the corridor of the Kailāsa temple there is a unique sculpture showing Śiva seated with *Ardhayogapāṭṭa* around his left knee, playing the *ghaṭavādya* (Fig. 71). Śiva is four-armed, and both his principal hands are planted on the leather strip covering the mouth of the instrument. Śiva, with his eyes almost closed in ecstasy, seems to enjoy the rhythmic performance.

Another excellent Rāshtrakūṭa sculpture is from Narasamaṅgalam in Mysore. It is first of the Saptamātrikā group in the Rāmeśvara temple here, representing Viṇādhara, with the lute held against his chest, the goard resting on his shoulder. The two principal arms manipulate the musical instruments, while the other two hold the trident and drum. While these two musical figures lay stress on the musical accompaniment of *vāchika* in dance, a glimpse into the *āhārya* part is given in another sculpture from the Kailāsa temple at Ellora, while Śiva adjusts a long garland on his crown, around which he is winding it. He stands on Apasmāra and is about to commence the dance, and, as a preliminary, this decoration of the *jaṭā* is introduced. This last sculpture is from the upper storey in the *pradakṣiṇa* ambulatory around Kailāsa (Fig. 70).

Chola

The Cholas were by far the most important dynasty that contributed towards the enrichment of the visual form of the dancing Lord. There are several excellent examples in stone, but, probably the most important and the greatest achievement of the sculptor was through the medium of metal. Vijayālaya's successors, Āditya and Parātanka, were devoted to temple building, and to their special patron deity, the dancing lord at Chidambaram. They signified their reverence and affection for the deity by covering the dance hall at Chidambaram with gold. Gaṇḍarāditya (A.D. 949-959), the son of Parātanka, the pious king who composed the *Tiruvīśaiṭṭā*, a hymn on the Chidambaram temple, mentions in his work, how his father covered the shrine of Naṭarāja with gold. Śēmbian mā devī, the queen of



FIG. 72. *Painting of Devi under umbrella standing watching Śiva's dance, Pallava, late 7th century A.D., Panamalai.*

Gaṇḍarāditya, who was widowed very young, was the most pious queen that we know in history, highly respected by successive Chōḷa kings. She was probably one of the most remarkable queens in a family, whose tradition of building and endowing temples accounts for many other princesses of the line, such as Kundavai, the sister of the famous Rājarāja, following in her footsteps. Rājarāja (985-1015 A.D.), a remarkable ruler of this family, great at once in his military triumph and the organi-

sation of his empire, as well as patronage of art and literature, and noted for his religious tolerance, completed the most magnificent temple in the Chōḷa realm in his capital at Tañjāvūr, in the twentyfifth year of his reign. The deity there was named after the king, Rājarājeśvaramuḍayār, and the large treasure captured by the monarch in his victories over several contemporary kingdoms, was utilised for the enrichment of the temple. His intense devotion to Śiva has earned him the title,



FIG. 73. Śiva dancing in *lalita*, mural in colour, Rāshtrakūṭa, 8th century A.D., Nandinayāga, Kailāsa temple, Ellora.

Śivapādaśekhara, and his taste for art the title, *Nityavinoda*, both of which are reflected in his zeal and liberality for Śiva, as revealed in his inscriptions on the plinth of the temple, as well as his aesthetic taste, revealed in the magnificent sculptural work in stone and metal during his time. A staggering list of the variety of form of the deity in bronzes, dedicated by him to the temple, reveals how very well the metal craftsmen were patronised and honoured during his day, and the art thrived, due to the special efforts and deep appreciation of the emperor himself. The long series of inscriptions on the temple plinth constitutes a valuable record of history, giving an idea of the emperor's personality, influence, power and liberality, and also illuminates the economic, political and social conditions of his time. His taste, in the creation of his wealth of bronzes, dedicated by the emperor to the temple, can well be understood against this background. It could be only the great Rājendra, the son of this great monarch, who could eclipse, to an extent, the greatness of his father. Rājendra

was not only an outstanding military genius, but was deeply devoted to Śiva. He erected a liquid pillar of victory (*jalamayastambha*), from the Gangetic area, as a thanksgiving to his patron deity, after his successful military campaign. This took the shape of a huge tank in the new capital, Gaṅgaikōṇḍacholapuram, built by him to celebrate his triumph. The only tribute that he obtained from the northern rulers he vanquished, the water of the Ganges, filled this tank. The temple of Śiva, a great monument, erected by him, stands here close to the tank, as a visual embodiment of his intense devotion to Śiva. The innovations that he introduced in this temple, as well as the war trophies he brought from Veṅgī, Kalinga, Nōlambavāḍī bespeak his aesthetic taste and connoisseurship.

Kulottuṅga II (1135-1150), son of Vikrama Chōḷa, effected elaborate renovations for the temple at Chidambaram, as narrated in the chronicles of this king, called *Kulottuṅgaśōḷan ulā*. This artistic instinct was a sustained one,



FIG. 74. Painting of Natarāja in the golden hall in Chidambaram temple, Chōla, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tañjāvūr.

and in the reign of his son Rājarāja II, also known by his title, *Rāja-gambhīra*, the lovely *maṇḍapa*, pillared hall of the temple at Dārāsūram, was built. The diplomatic marriage between Rājasundarī and the Kalinga king Rājarāja accounts for the offspring, named Anantavarmachodagaṅgadeva, from whom was descended Narasimha I, the famous builder of the Koṇārak temple, who introduced a Chōla motif of wheel and horse, that occurs for the first time at Dārāsūram and Chidambaram in the twelfth century, in an elaborate form in his own magnificent temple at Koṇārak. Even the last of the Chōla emperors, Kulottuṅga III (1178-1212), had a hand at renovation in Chidambaram, Kāñchī and other places, in addition to his creation of the beautiful temple of Kaṁpahareśvara at Tribhuvanam. The late Chōla *gopurams* at Chidambaram itself are equalled by magnificent ones, erected by the late Pāṇḍyas, who stepped into the shoes of the Chōlas in the thirteenth century. The *gopura* at Chidambaram, erected by Sundarapāṇḍya, is a remarkable achievement of the temple builder.

In the Chōla paintings, in the Brihadiśvara temple at Tañjāvūr, the favourite theme of Natarāja in the temple at Chidambaram, is re-

peated more than once (Fig. 74). It is especially presented here as the object of worship of the emperor, Rājarāja, with his queens. We know from Chōla history that the *sabhā* was covered with gold by an early ancestor of Rājarāja, and the Chōlas always considered Āḍavallān, a name by which Natarāja was known, as their tutelary deity. They took a delight in representing themselves as devotees of the lord of the dance hall at Chidambaram. One of the paintings shows the temple at Chidambaram, Natarāja dancing in the *ānandatāṇḍava* pose, in the *sabhā* of the temple, represented with the front porch approached by steps, with the lotus tank in the vicinity, from which emerges a devotee with offerings. Śivakāmasundarī, leaning on the bull, is shown close to Śiva dancing, outside the temple in the courtyard between the *gopura* and the *sabhā*. In front of the *vimāna* is seated Rājarāja, with his hands in *añjali* or adoration.

A little away, there is another painting, a much more elaborate one, representing Natarāja in all his glory at Chidambaram, with the entire concourse of Dikshita priests around him, the emperor shown at one end, accompanied by his queens and a large retinue, including his chosen soldiers and bodyguards.

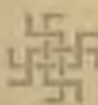




FIG. 75. *Painting of celestial musicians and dancers, Chola, 11th century A.D., Brihadiśvara temple, Tanjāvūr.*

The ground plan of the temple is also wonderfully given here. It is a very interesting representation of the very high regard that the Chola emperors had for Natarāja at Chidambaram, just as they had immense devotion for Thyāgarāja, as Somāskanda from Tiruvālūr, a bronze believed to have been brought from heaven by Muchukunda, a very early mythical ancestor of the Cholas.

As elsewhere pointed out, Śiva is not only a supreme dancer, but also the spectator of the

excellence of dance. Celestial danseuses dance, as Śiva watches and the Gaṇas enjoy, while other celestials keep time. Appreciation from Śiva, as the master of dance, is their highest reward. Whole troops of celestials, moving gaily amidst the clouds and dancing often with their hands in *ardhachandra* and *alapallava*, is magnificent portrayal in the Chola paintings from the Brihadiśvara temple (Fig. 75).

There is sculpture of early Chola workmanship, from the Bhoganandiśvara temple at

Nandi, where traces of Rāshtrakūṭa influence may be easily noticed. This is obvious in the type of decoration and detail of ornamentation. An elaborate necklace, twisted strands composing the *muktā-yajñopavīta*, the long garland of bells and other decorative features, as also the carvings of musical Gaṇas, dancing Apsarās and Vidyādhara, entwined by a creeper and foliage design, cleverly arranged as decoration for the *kūḍu* top of the niche, in which the main figure is depicted, is very interesting indeed. Nandī is eagerly pulling at tender shoots, held in one of the hands of Śiva while Devī is seated at his feet, with a number of vessels around her, to suggest that she feeds the entire universe. Śiva, offering tender shoots to Nandī, is only an indication of his sustaining the universe by feeding, as the drum in his hand suggests creation. The *khaṭvāṅga*, in one of his hands, as also the snake, suggest death and the beyond. The musical figures all around express his dance and music, as the significance of creation, protection and destruction (Fig. 76).

There is yet another dancing figure of Śiva from the same temple, exhibiting the fusion of Chola and Rāshtrakūṭa art motifs. This is in *lalita* mode, though the position of the hands is reversed from the description in the text, and represents rather their position in *añchita*. However, it exactly tallies with the sculptural representation of the *karana* at Chidambaram. The text, however, is clear about the relative hands, *karihasta bhaved vāmo dakṣiṇāścha vivartitaḥ bahuśaḥ kuṭṭitaḥ pādo jñeyam tallalitam budhaiḥ* (Fig. 77).

The musical figures of Gaṇas, as decoration entwined in foliage on the *kūḍu*, niche top, are very appropriate. Flutes, cymbals, drums are all in action. Śiva is four-armed; instead of his hand in *abhaya*, it is in *āhūyavarada*.

Yet another sculpture from the Bhoganandīśvara temple shows Śiva, eight-armed, dancing in the same *lalita* pose. He carries the trident, drum, jingling rattle, snake, bell and skull cap. On one of his straggling *jaṭās*, which has escaped from the main bound-up cluster, there is what appears to be a semi-symbolic representation of Gaṅgā, as the human head is clear, but the body and hands somewhat faintly done. It is Śiva carrying Ganges on his swirling locks. There are Gaṇas on either side of him, one playing the *ūrdhva* drum and the other, cymbals. He is trampling Apasmāra, as he

dances over him. The reason for repeating the Naṭeśa figure so often on the Bhoganandīśvara temple is not far to seek, as it was a musical age, when dance and music were given the highest place among fine arts; and details of musical and dance figures, on pierced windows with carved screens, depicting the *kalpavalli* motif, the meandering creeper forming circlets to entwine such artistic figures, are indeed very significant. Similarly, of the same early Chola period from Kerala, there is a group of dancers on the wall of a balustrade in the Trivikramaṅgalaṃ temple; here is both the normal dance, showing the *karana*s and *aṅgaḥāras*, as well the dance approaching acrobatics, by balancing small pitchers on the head, shoulder, hand, back and so forth. One of the dancers, with her hands thrown up in glee, is in *ardhamattalli*, except that the feet have come closer to form *pādasvastika*.

Of the earliest Chola Naṭarājas, the one from Okkūr, in the Madras Museum, is noteworthy for the type with the *prabhā*, while the unique *chaturatāṇḍava* Śiva of about the same date from Tiruvaraṅguḷam, now in the National Museum, New Delhi, represents the type, without the *prabhā*.

The Okkūr Naṭarāja (Fig. 78) dances in the normal *bhujāṅga* pose, with all his four hands as in the normal variety of Śiva, with *damaru*, *abhaya*, *daṇḍahasta* and holding fire. The flame of fire is held, not on the palm itself, but in a small vessel. The hand is not in *ardhachandra*, but is held in the normal way, with the fingers. In the case of the Tiruvaraṅguḷam Naṭarāja, the flame is on the palm itself. While there is a little folk element in the form of Okkūr Naṭarāja, the one from Tiruvaraṅguḷam is in classical elegance. It cannot be said that the Okkūr sculptor lacked artistic ability, as his fashioning of the flames of the *prabhā*, the lotus petals of the *padma* and even the face of Naṭarāja himself, is superb. However, he has fully bestowed all his ability in fashioning the classical elegance on the Devī that accompanies the Naṭarāja from Okkūr, and is its contemporary. Here, the modelling of the torso, the grace of the limbs, the folds of the garment, the arrangement of the drapery, and the jewels, as well as the *makuṭa*, the smile on the face, which is almost unrepresented in the photograph, is all an expressive saga of praise.

The Tiruvaraṅguḷam figure (Fig. 79), on the other hand, apart from its being the only avail-



FIG. 76. Natarāja from Bhoganandisvara temple, Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Nandī, Andhra Pradesh.



FIG. 77. Natarāja from Bhoganandisvara temple, Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Nandī, Andhra Pradesh.

able example in metal of this special mode of dance, is probably unrivalled for the delicacy of treatment of every limb, the taste and restraint in decoration, the life infused in the figure itself, by a spring suggested in the left leg, as the right pats the back of the Apasmāra dwarf below. The *daṇḍahasta* is more natural than conventional. The hand holding the drum, almost seems to move and the ease with which the flame is held in the palm of the left hand, gives one a feeling that the touch of the fire is as cool, as on the tail of Hanumān, as described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The arrangement of the *jaṭā* is simple and effective. The slim figure, the artistic contour of the body, the back and the front and the side, from whatever angle seen, and the tastefully created *padma-pīṭha* and *bhadrāpīṭha*, proclaim this a great masterpiece.

The only other Natarāja of the early Chōḷa period which could match these two in aesthetic taste is undoubtedly the one from Śivapuram. This is provided with a *prabhā*. The arrangement of the *jaṭās* is very pleasing and the moon, as a crescent, appears in unconventional form, fairly high up on the dressed up part of the *jaṭā*, right above the skull. In elegance of form, this is also unchallenged. The dwarf groans under the weight of the figure above. The dancing form is the normal type. The flame is, however, carried in a vessel, and not on the palm itself. The flames of the *prabhā* come close to the Okkūr type and are very natural. The face suggests that Śiva is lost in a trance, apparently, in appreciation of the highest form of dance, which he alone is capable of performing.

A remarkable early Chōḷa Natarāja comes from Taṇḍantōṭṭam (Fig. 80, 82). Taṇḍantōṭṭam is famous for the Pallava copper plate grant, found in the village. It is interesting that the village is also known as Tāṇḍavapura, and Śiva himself in this place is called Naṭanapurīśvara. Both Natarāja and Śivakāmasundarī here form an exquisite pair. This is extremely natural and free from the conventional mode of disposition of the limbs. Noteworthy is the special way the sculptor has treated the dancing figure, before the movement gathers momentum. The hands are not widely spread. The left leg is just being raised to assume the normal position of *ānandatāṇḍava*. The *karihasta* is more deeply diagonal and bent down. Even the hand in *abhaya* has not yet been raised. Apasmāra is a very tiny dwarf, almost covered by the foot



FIG. 78. Natarāja, Early Chōla, 10th century A.D., Okkūr, Distt. Tañjāvūr, Madras Museum.

on his back. The arrangement of the *jaṭās* is charmingly artistic, particularly to the right, where, with the crescent moon settled on top, a whole wreath is shown, slipping down with flowers like stars in the sky interspersed with the *jaṭās*, reminding us of Kālidāsa's line describing the bejewelled flower-decked braid of a damsel, *chitramālyānukīrṇe rativigalitabandhe keśapāśe priyāyāḥ*. Śiva is always Ardhanārīśvara. The snake, with its hood raised up, is equally lively. The single finger raised, as the rest of the fingers hold the drum, is very artistic indeed. The tinkling anklets, with tiny bells specially provided, bespeak the rhythm of the dance, the *tāla laya*. The composed face is suggestive of his mastery of dance. There is

almost an assurance of grace and ease in the dance of the great dancer. The pose and dignity of Devī as Śivakāmasundarī, witnessing the dance, is equally praiseworthy (Fig. 81). The *nīvibandha*, with its folds, hanging from the waist zone to the left, is extremely artistic, as also the subdued arrangement of the tassels. The crown of Devī, as usual in early figures, is diminutive.

Śiva dancing in *lalita*, Kālāntaka (Fig. 84) and Gajāntaka (Fig. 83), all from the Mūvar temple at Koḍumbālūr, constitute the best artistic presentation of Śiva's dance theme, in the earliest Chōla phase. The smile on the face of Śiva as Kālāri, is to offset the *tarjani* pointing towards Kāla underneath him. Even as Saṁhāramūrti, Śiva is still gracious. The slim features, the simple ornamentation and the wonderful charm in arranging stances, make all these figures superb.

From an early Chōla temple at Śrīnivāsanallūr there are fine examples of Natarāja, almost as miniatures in stone. One of them (Fig. 85) shows four-armed Śiva dancing *ūrdhvajānu*, carrying the drum and the *triśūla*. With the left hand thrown up sideways in pure joy, *rechita* and the corresponding right hand in *abhaya*, he dances in response to the musical accompaniment of the *ghaṭa* and cymbals, played by Bhūtagaṇas, the Nandī bull, also approaching him in great appreciation of his dance movements.

Another miniature from here (Fig. 86) shows Śiva, eight-armed, again dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*, with the axe, drum, trident, fire and snake in his hands, while the rest are in *karihasta*, *abhaya* and *saṁdamśa*. The Gaṇas, on either side, play the drum and the cymbals.

Another Chōla example of the tenth century, which is unique for the mode of dance, *lalita*, is from the Śiva temple at Koḍumuḍi (Fig. 87) in Coimbatore district. Though it is a pleasing figure, there is still a folk touch about it in the arrangement of the pearls of the necklace, and the hand in *abhaya*, and so forth. The disposition of the hands is in the normal fashion, as in most Natarājas, holding a drum, in *abhaya*, *daṇḍa* and the fire characterising the four arms.

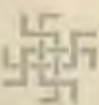




FIG. 79. *Natarāja* in *chatura* dance, Chola, 10th century A.D., Tiruvārāṅgulam, National Museum.

The slightly lifted up heel of the right leg suggests the patting of the feet on the ground for rhythm. The *añchita*, *kuñchita*, *kuṭṭita* modes of foot fall are indeed most interesting in this and other bronzes depicting *lalita*, *chatura*, *añchita*, *rechita*, *nikuṭṭita* and other modes.

Another fine example of this early date, tenth century, is the charming *Natarāja* from the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 88) which suggests great movement in the thrown up locks of the *jaṭā* and *daṇḍahasta*, close on the *abhaya hasta*. The little image seems to live and move.

The swirling ends of the upper garment, tied around the stomach, almost suggest the force of motion. The face, with eyes almost closed in contemplation of the excellence of the dance, reveal him as a connoisseur of art. A special feature in this example is that Gaṅgā, instead of being on his locks, is just perched on the *prabhā*, with her hands clasped in *añjali*, as she respectfully watches the dance of her Lord. The flames on the *prabhāvali*, as well as the lotus petals, are very naturally moulded.

To about 1000 A.D. should be assigned the



FIG. 80. *Naṭarāja*, early Chola, 10th century A.D., Taṇḍantōṭṭam, Tañjāvūr Distt.



FIG. 81. *Śivakāmasundarī*, early Chola, 10th century A.D., Taṇḍantōṭṭam, Tañjāvūr Distt.

famous *Naṭarāja* from Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, now in the Madras Museum (Fig. 89). It is a classical example and the best known image of its kind in any public museum in the world. The pose of this figure, its rhythmic movement, the flexion of the body and limbs, the perfect smile, the physical proportions and the flowing contours are all blended into a pose so amazing that it is no wonder that Rodin, the world famous sculptor, considered this to be the most perfect representation of rhythmic movement in the world.

Not so very well known, but undoubtedly one of the greatest masterpieces of the Chola age, is the large *Naṭarāja* in the Bṛihadīśvara temple at Tañjāvūr, a worthy processional deity, befitting the mighty temple, erected by the emperor Rājarāja and presented by him to the shrine, along with other images (Fig. 90).

The eleventh century saw the creation of several magnificent bronzes, like the one from Śiyāḷi, the famous *Naṭarāja* with *prabhā*, as it is known, from Velāṅkaṇṇi, now in the Madras Government Museum, the *Naṭarāja* from Punganūr, usually known as the *Naṭarāja* without *prabhā*, also in the Madras Government Museum. The arrangement of the *jaṭās* of the Velāṅkaṇṇi figure, the disdainful smile on his face, the ease in the hands of protection and the slightly constrained and sculpturesque *daṇḍa-hasta*, approaching the elegantly raised foot, proclaim it a great masterpiece. Certainly the sculptor who fashioned this very elegant figure of the *Naṭarāja* of Śiyāḷi was inspired by the tradition of the faith and devotion of the baby saint Tirujñānasambanda. The Gaṅgā image in this case, almost crawling on the *jaṭā*, to whisper in the ear of Śiva, her devotional hymns, as she watches his dance, is indeed very



FIG. 82. *Naṭarāja*, early Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Taṇḍantōṭṭam, Tañjāvūr Distt.

elegant. In the case of the Punganūr image (Fig. 91), Gaṅgā is, on the other hand, moving away towards the end of the *jaṭā*, almost afraid of the violent swirl of his locks, as he dances his *tāṇḍava*, as in another sculpture of Gajāntaka from Dārāsūram, where the goddess, even according to the indication of the *dhyāna* text itself, is moving away, with child Skanda on her hip, in fear one might say, at the violent dance of her lord.

One of the finest examples of early Chōḷa *Naṭarājas* with *prabhā* and *jaṭās* spread out almost as a network with their terminals touching the *prabhāvali* is from somewhere from Tañjāvūr district, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (Fig. 92). Apasmāra's unconcerned attitude as he plays with the snake in his hand does demand attention.

The Devī of very early Chōḷa date, also from



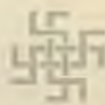
FIG. 83. *Natarāja and Gajāntaka from Múvar temple, early Chōla, 10th century A.D., Koḍumbāḷūr.*

the Metropolitan Museum, is the very embodiment of grace (Fig. 93). Her *makuṭa* or crown is diminutive as in all early figures. The theme of the long chain as a tassel with banyan leaf pattern to pendant on either thigh is another noteworthy feature as also the large hollow circular scrolls on the earlobes.

Remarkable for the upward spring in the figure, in consonance with a circle of flames and several terminals of the *jaṭās* arranged as a

network is the early Chōla *Natarāja* from the Musée Guimet, Paris (Fig. 94).

The glory of the *jaṭā* of Śiva and its significance as represented in Chōla sculpture has rarely been excelled. *Jaṭābhāra* or a heavy mass of *jaṭās*, as elsewhere pointed out, is an attribute of Śiva to suggest his immense knowledge, and corresponds to the sculptor's version of *ushnīsha*, the cranial protuberance of Buddha indicating his supreme knowledge. The charm-



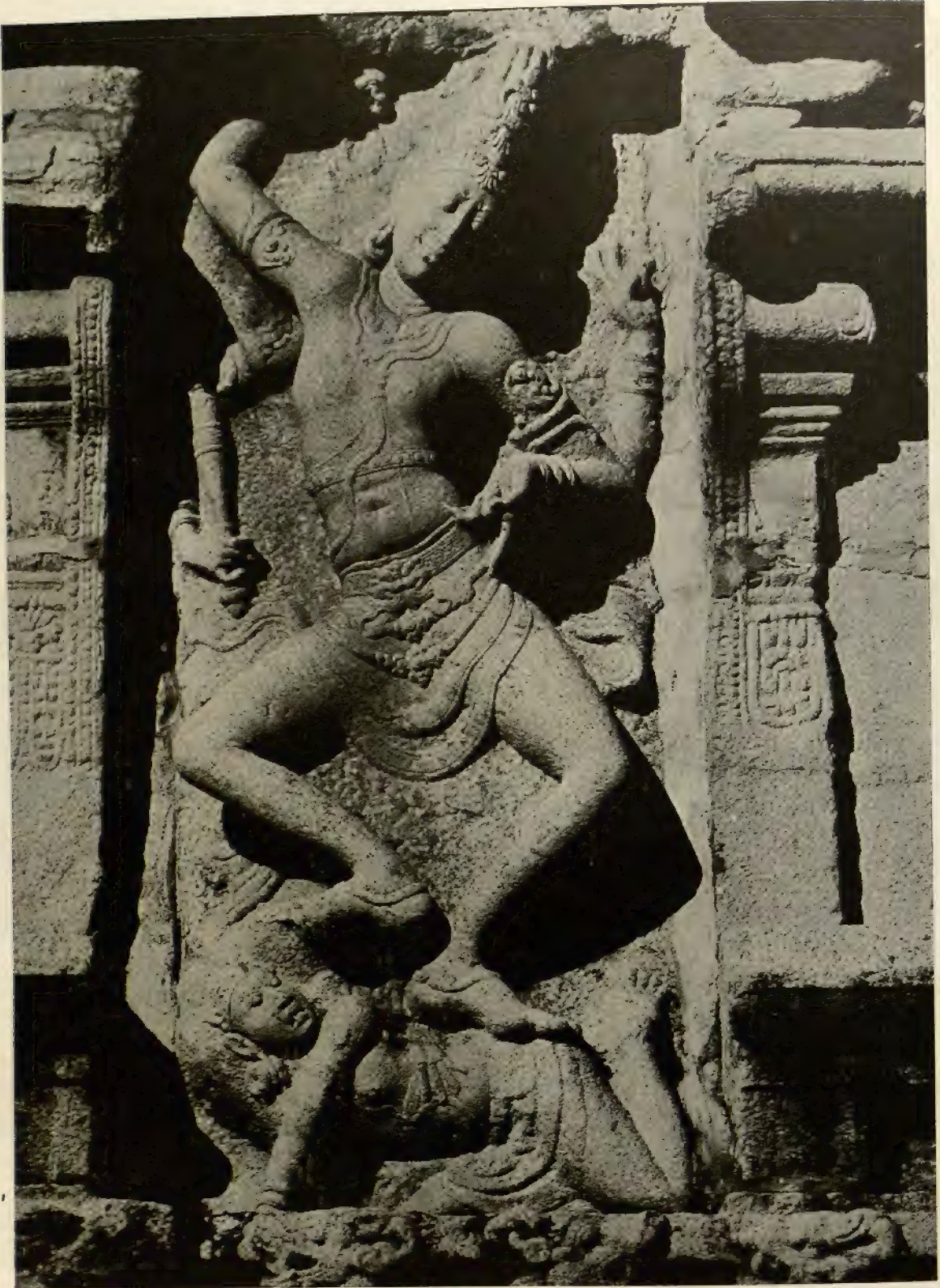


FIG. 84. *Kālāntaka* from Mūvar temple, early Choḷa, 10th century A.D., Koḍumbālūr.

ing face of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, from the *śikhara* of the Choḷīśvara temple, with an enigmatic smile on the face, suggests supreme wisdom in the Master of all learning (Fig. 95). The same is also shown in an extraordinarily arranged loose turban like *jaṭābhāra* of Śiva as Naṭarāja, dancing as a decoration of the *vimāna* of the Tiruvālīśvaram temple (Fig. 96) built by Rājarāja, famous as the architect of the Brīha-diśvara temple. This is a beautiful arrangement of *jaṭā*, recalling earlier and later ones, by

which, respectively, it has been inspired and itself inspired. To understand the heredity of this, a whole series of *jaṭābhāras* as in the early Pāṇḍyan Naṭarāja in Śevilipatti cave temple and the Pallava Viṇādhara from the top tiers of the Dharmarājaratha at Mahābalipuram should be recalled. But more than this, and almost amazingly exactly like this, is the *jaṭābhāra* of Śiva, two-armed, seated, axe in hand, with Nandi at his feet, a very early 4th century Pallava carving from the Kṛishṇā valley, now

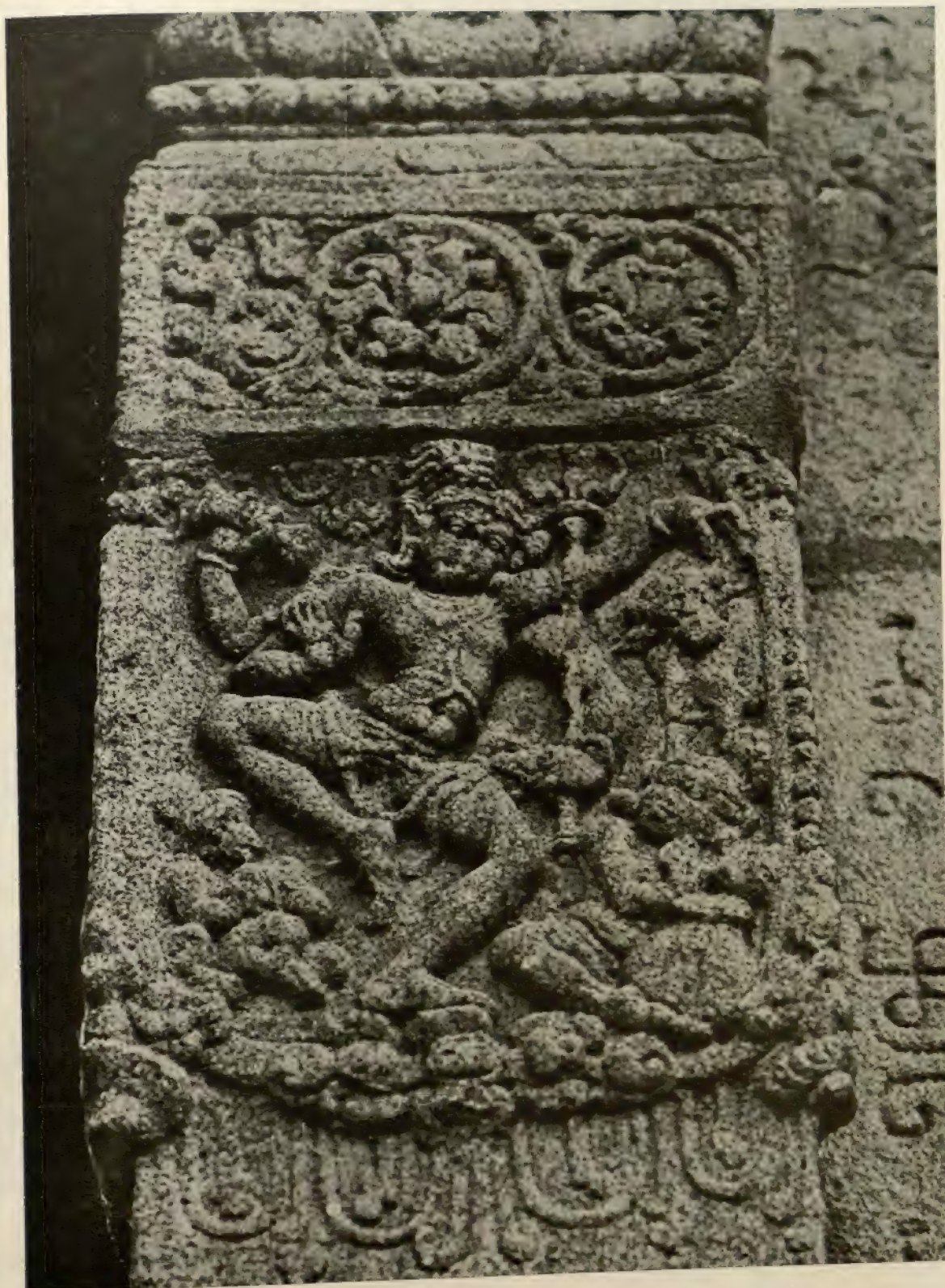


FIG. 85. Miniature Naṭarāja carving, early Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Kuraṅganātha temple, Śrīnivāsanallūr.

in the Bezwāḍa Museum (Fig. 97). Immediately inspired by the Tiruvāliśvaram Naṭarāja's *jaṭābhāra* is that of the Vṛishabhāntika metal image from the Tañjāvūr Art Gallery. In all these cases, whether Śiva stands or is seated or dancing, as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, as Viṇādhara or as Naṭarāja, the *jaṭābhāra* indicates his immense knowledge and proclaims him the master of learning, whether philosophy or music or dance. The normal Viṇā Dakṣiṇāmūrti, where special stress is not laid on the *jaṭābhāra*,

is the type of which the sculpture from the Musée Guimet is a magnificent example, the position of his hands indicating the *viṇā* which is not really present but is only suggested (Fig. 98).

Another beautiful early Chōḷa sculpture from Koḍumbālūr is specially indicative of the grandeur and glory of Śiva's *jaṭā* which is here most artistically chiselled (Fig. 99). Two fingers held up towards a single strand of Śiva's



FIG. 86. Miniature Naṭarāja, early Chola, 10th century A.D., Kuraṅganātha temple, Śrīnivāsanallūr.

locks, drawn out to receive Gaṅgā, in his Gaṅgādhara aspect, is as much to say that a single lock is enough to completely imprison the mighty surging heavenly stream, that could even fill the ocean, drunk dry by the great sage Agastya. The Chola sculptor delighted in a variety of expression of the potentiality, power and grace of Śiva's crown of locks.

The Chidambaram tradition has another type of Naṭarāja, which is most magnificently represented in the image from Melaperumballam, now in the Madras Government Museum (p. 20, Fig. 6). The *jaṭās* are here and the subdued violence of the *tāṇḍava* dance has not yet gathered momentum. They still are spread over the back and have not risen up to

sway on the sides, almost as a background to his head and shoulders. The hand holding the drum seems to sound it by a pat of the pointing finger. The fire held in the left hand, between the thumb and the pointing finger, almost suggests that death is the end of ignorance and the birth of spiritual knowledge and immortality consequent on it. This idea is suggested by the *vyākhyānamudrā* which in *Nāṭyaśāstra* is termed *saṁdamśahasta*. The raised foot is still not so high up, almost as if to reach the dwarf musician below, and the entire range of devotees, that are equally dwarfs in their approach to the Lord, and whom, with compassion the Lord approaches, rather than call them to rise up to his height. It is even as Ruskin would have the kings and queens of



FIG. 87. *Śiva dancing in lalita, Chola in Pāṇḍya territory, Koḍumūḍi, Coimbatore District.*

the literary realm come down a few steps to reach the ability and grasp of the devotee at the altar of literature. Unaware of the thud on his back, the dwarf Apasmāra plays with the snake held in his hand with a beaming smile on his face. The dwarf Gaṇas, one wonderfully playing the *ghaṭa* and the other the cymbals, synchronise their tap with a moment of the movement of the great dancer. The dwarf has just given a pat to the drum and raised his hand to look up with wonder and the other has just sounded the cymbals and pulled them apart as the supreme dancer has just moved

an inch of his leg to the ground in consonance with the musical mode. Ornamentation is here simplicity itself. There is a central loop in each one of these varieties, representing the Chidambaram type of Naṭarāja image. Similarly, noteworthy is the simple but very effective decoration of the hair style, the peacock feathers arranged on one side, to balance the *dhattūra* flower on the other. It is indeed a type to be noticed, of which there are several temples in Uḍayārpālayam, Śirkālī, Paruttiappankoil, Kīlakāṭṭūr (Fig. 100) and, nearly also, like those from the temples in



FIG. 88. *Nāṭarāja*, early Chola, 10th century A.D., Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

Tirttanagarī (Fig. 101), Vaidīśvarankoil, Tranquebar (Fig 105) and Śeynalūr (Fig 103).

An unusual dainty Chola creation in metal is the *Nāṭarāja* in *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* pose from the temple at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu (Fig. 108). It is

almost a continuation of the *Vikshiptakarāṇa*, as the left leg and hand are both thrown sideways upwards. If they were more towards the side and diagonal, it would have been a perfect representation of the *vikshipta* mode, but really it is *lalāṭatilaka* almost achieved,



FIG. 89. Natarāja, early Chola, 1000 A.D., Tiruvālaṅgādu, Madras Museum.

as the foot raised has nearly reached the face, to rub the forehead, as the text of Bharata would have it: *pādasyāṅgushṭhakena tu lalāṭe tilakam kuryyāllalāṭatilakam tu tat.*

In *vikshipta* the description is *vikshiptam hastapādam cha prishṭhataḥ pārśvatopi vā.*

As already remarked, it is more upwards than sideways, which brings it nearer the *lalāṭatilaka* than *vikshipta*. The eight arms are wonderfully composed. The normal arms carrying the *damaru*, showing the *abhaya*, the

arm in *gajahasta* and the one carrying the fire are practically in their normal composition, and of the others, one carries the *nāga* as *pāśa*, one the *śūla*, the third is in the *khaṭakāmukha* and the upraised hand is almost free, like a *rechitahasta* nearly touching the toe of the raised foot. This is one of the finest of unique dance figures of Śiva from South India. The Chola sculptor who fashioned it must be reckoned among the greatest creative masters of a golden age of metal craft.

A beautiful Natarāja of the normal variety,

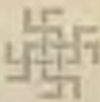




FIG. 90. *Natarāja and Śivakāmasundarī*, early Chōḷa, 11th century A.D., *Bṛihadīśvara temple, Tanjāvūr*.

with a double band of *prabhā*, having a circle of flames all around, and with an exceedingly large and elaborate *jaṭā* spread on both sides, like a regular network, is from the Tāntoṇṛiśvara temple from Tiruindalūr, Māyūram taluq.

As a contrast to this is the Śiva from Gomuk-tīśvara temple in Tiruvāvaḍuturai, also from Māyūram taluq, which has an unusual composition of *jaṭā*, only three locks on either side, bare and spread out. It is a late Chōḷa example of the thirteenth century (Fig. 102).

The dancing Śiva from the temple in Uḍaiyārpāḷayam in the taluq of that name, follows the Chidambaram tradition very closely, both in regard to Natarāja and Śivakāmasundarī. There is a narrow *prabhāvali* for Devī also. In the case of the dancing Śiva, the

jaṭās rest on the shoulder and do not swirl up sideways. There is no elaborate dressing up of the *jaṭāmakūṭa*, but the peacock feathers are prominently shown to the right, as well as the *dhattūra* flower. The anklets are very clear on the feet, with tinkling little bells attached. The flanking dwarf Gaṇas sound one, the drum and the other, the cymbals and, as usual, it is one synchronising moment of dance and music.

Undoubtedly, the most important from the Pāṇḍyan realm, fashioned in the early Chōḷa period, is the Natarāja from Poruppumeṭṭu-paṭṭi (Fig. 61, 62), now preserved in the Madras Museum. In this piece, it is to be noted that the Pāṇḍyan tradition of the right leg raised in dance, a special feature in the silver hall in Madurai, is represented. It has all the charming features that make up masterpieces of early



FIG. 91. *Naṭarāja*, Chōla, 11th century A.D., Punganūr, Distt. *Taṅjāvūr*.

Chōla workmanship. The dwarf *Apasmāra* is very large sized. As usual, in very early representations of *Naṭarāja*, the hands are still nearer the body than away and apart, a feature we find rather pronounced from the eleventh century onwards.

Among the lithic representations of *Naṭarāja*, there are several early ones, of which the dancing figures of the earliest Chōla phase in the Pudukōṭṭai area, from temples like *Aivar* and *Mūvar* are very beautiful.

One of the finest images of *Naṭarāja* is from

the *Mūvarkoil* of the early group of temples at *Koḍumbālūr*. It comes very close to the *Kālāri* type also. This is in a series of dancing figures on each of the tiers, representing *Kālāri* (Fig. 84), *Naṭarāja* and *Gajāntaka* (Fig. 83). It is a delicate representation of Śiva's dance in the *lalita* pose. The main hands are in *abhaya* and *gajahasta* and completely answer the description of *lalita*.

The knit brow of Śiva as *Kālāri* here is suggestive of the destructive aspect of a *Samhāramūrti*. The malignant demon *Apasmāra*, created by the *ṛishis*, has brows knit in



FIG. 92. *Natarāja*, early Chola, 1000 A.D., Metropolitan Museum, New York.

wrath, even as he writhes under the stamping feet of Śiva. The dancing figure has only four arms, one holding the *pāśa*, the other *paraśu*, one in *tarjanī* and the other hand in an attitude of holding an indistinct weapon. The flexion of the body and the dance pose are very pleasing. The pose itself appears almost like

ardhasūchī. The dwarf under the feet of Śiva is not quite crouching on the ground, but pulls himself up bravely to bear the weight of the dancing figure on his back.

In the tier next above is Gajāntaka dancing. He has four arms, two of which he has raised



FIG. 93. *Śivakāmasundarī*, early Chōla, 10th century A.D., Metropolitan Museum, New York.

up to hold the hide of the elephant. His left leg is a little raised and bent, as is usual, in such representations. It is almost *bhujaṅga-trāsita*, or it may be even somewhat like *garuḍa-*

plutaka, since it conveys the idea that it is Garuḍa, who could pounce on the elephants and carry them away to destroy them; and as Śiva actually destroyed Gajāśura, the *karṇa*



FIG. 94. *Natarāja*, early Chola, 1000 A.D., Musée Guimet, Paris.

could be significant. Devī is shown close to him with Skanda on her hip, frightened as the *dhyānaśloka* would require it in the Śilpa text.

At Gaṅgaikondacholapuram, the dance of Kālāntaka, on the figure of Kāla or Yama, is exactly based on the form of Natarāja, dancing on Apasmāra. The hand in *tarjanī* pointing to Yama, the deer above the hand in *vismaya*, wonder, the *paraśu* raised in his upper right arm in action, and the miniature figure carving on either side of the niche, all suggest the theme portrayed here, Kālāntaka. In the case of Madanāntaka also, it is again the *tarjanī* hand of Śiva that suggests his destruction of Kāma. Here again, it is through the diminutive carvings in relief on either side of the niche, showing Manmatha, Rati and other Devas supplicating and shrieking in one voice

to Śiva, not to burn Manmatha to ashes, that its significance is clarified. That Śiva is a *yogi* and a teacher is here suggested by the *akshamālā* in one of his right hands and the *vastrayajñopavīta* that he wears. We have seen how this *akshamālā* is used by Śiva as a dancer, at least in some representations, if not in all, especially where the emphasis is sought to be laid on his aspect as teacher of the art of dance. It should here be recalled that in the case of Natarāja, invariably there is a strip of cloth shown, resting on his left shoulder, to suggest *vastra-yajñopavīta*, which is always to be used by teachers like Dakṣiṇāmūrti and sages in *yoga*.

The image from the Bṛhadiśvara temple at Tañjāvūr is unrivalled for the way the sculptor has handled stone as if it were metal or wood.



FIG. 95. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti with jaṭābhāra, from Choḷiśvara temple, early Choḷa, 10th century A.D.*

Equally interesting is Rājendra Choḷa's contribution to Naṭarāja on the walls of the Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram shrine. Here, there are smaller panels on either side and below the niche containing Naṭarāja. They represent the musical fervour and the adoration of the Lord of dance by Pārvatī, who watches. Viṣṇu plays the *mṛdaṅga*, Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya hurry on their respective vehicles, anxious not to miss the dance of Śiva, which their mother is so watchfully observing with her hands resting on Nandī, who is equally lost in admiration. The Gaṇas below are hilarious in their joy, one plays the drum, another sounds the cymbals, while the third sings. Kāraikkāmmaiyār, the emaciated devotee, who chose to renounce the perfection of feminine beauty

to be unaware of aught else except God, is sounding the cymbals, seated almost skeleton-like. To the left of Śiva, and dancing away from him, is Kālī. It is to be noticed that she is still in *vaishṇavasthāna*, without raising her foot. We may recall that it was only when Śiva raised up his foot completely, in *lalāṭatilaka*, that she accepted defeat.

There is yet another of the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of Śiva, from Kailāsanātha temple in Rishiyūr, Maṇṇārguḍi taluq, representing the right foot of Śiva, completely raised to compose the *lalāṭatilaka* pose, the right hand raised and coming right over his head. Down below, to the left, a Gaṇa is running away, scared as he sees the violence of the *tāṇḍava* dance. To the right,



FIG. 96. *Natarāja with jaṭābhāra*, early Chōla, 11th century A.D., Tiruvāliśvaram.

below the raised leg, there is Kālī dancing with her legs crossed in *pādasvastika*. Showing her below this leg, is almost to suggest that she has accepted the defeat, unable, out of modesty, to raise her leg in similar mode (Fig. 109).

In Kīlakaṇḍambūr, there is another late Chōla representation of the same *lalāṭatilaka* mode of Śiva's dance, also a perfect example. While in the Rishiyūr sculpture, the upper right and left hands carry the drum and skull cap bowl, in the present one it is the axe and the deer,

the usual attributes of Śiva in South Indian sculpture. The additional pair of arms, provided in this sculpture, carry the *pāśa* and *ghaṇṭā*.

The Natarāja temple at Chidambaram has two exquisite sculptures of Śiva dancing in *chatura* and in *lalāṭatilaka*: while the former has four arms, the latter has eight. The main hands are in *abhaya* and raised above him, almost touching the upraised foot. A Śivagaṇa, with four arms, is playing the *ghaṭa* and Kālī stands



FIG. 97. Śiva and Nandi, Pallava, 4th century A.D., Bezvāḍa Museum.

quietly watching him as, unable to throw up her foot out of modesty, she has to declare herself defeated. While there is Apasmāra under the feet of the dancer in *chatura*, he is absent in the case of the other who dances on a *pīṭha*.

In the Śiva temple in Tirumalapāḍi in Uḍayārpālayam taluq, there is a fine example of *ūrdhvajānu*. In this case, the left leg instead of the right is raised, the right hand is in *abhaya* and the left thrown up in abandon. The other right hand holds the drum, while the left hand is in *vismaya*, suggesting how wonderful is the dance. A Gaṇa to his left plays the *ūrdhva* drum.

One of the earliest moments in the *bhujāṅga* mode of Śiva's dance is probably in the image in the Kadam̐bavanandīśvara temple from Kuḷittalai (Fig. 111). The leg is just being raised up. The hands are still close to the shoulder and are not swung apart, as the dance gains momentum. The swaying tassels and other peculiar arrangements show how different in concept and execution is this image

from the rest of the images that we know. There is also another important noteworthy factor here, that Naṭarāja is not dancing on Apasmāra, quite an unusual feature in South Indian representations of Naṭarāja. Equally noteworthy is the departure from the normal in the arrangement of the peacock feathers on the head, the crescent moon and a small fan-shaped decoration on either side, immediately behind the ear. This last feature is common in several North Indian images and observed in Orissan sculpture also. This is probably the feature introduced during the Chōḷa contacts with northern areas, through their campaigns for conquest. We know how Rājendra introduced several innovations, as for instance, the beard for Brahmā, at Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram, Lakulīśa staff in hand at Tiruvottiyūr, and so forth.

At Paḷaiyarai in Kumbakoṇam taluq, there is an image of Naṭarāja of the normal variety in the temple of Someśvara, in which the upraised leg is not so fully raised as usual. It is nearer the lithic representation of the *bhujāṅga* mode, in the pictorial enumeration of *karaṇas* at Chidambaram and other places. This is a fine example of early Chōḷa work. The sculptor's eye for the aesthetic beauty of the theme is evident in such noteworthy characteristics as the row of flames, only on the upper half of the *prabhā*. This, to an extent, relieves the monotony of a whole series. The uplifted leg, which is not quite the normal type, only slightly raised, and still moving up to assume the pose that one is normally accustomed to see in the *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Śiva, is very artistic indeed. The *karihasta* is not slanting, but rather straight and constricted, and there is a charm and verve in the way it is held. The slight tilt in the face makes it also more telling than if it were quite straight, facing the spectator. The arrangement of the *jaṭās*, to the left top, is also somewhat peculiar and artistic.

The next moment of the *ānandatāṇḍava* of Śiva (which is the same as *bhujāṅga*) is to be seen in another early Chōḷa image of great beauty from the Nellivanandēśvarar, in Tirunellikāval in Maṇṇārguḍi taluq. The single *sūchī* finger raised while the others hold



FIG. 98. *Viṇādhara*, early Chōḷa, 11th century A.D., Musée Guimet, Paris.

the drum, suggests Śiva calling attention, by a tap of the drum itself, instead of jerking it. The Apasmāra dwarf under the foot raises himself up a little in his earnest play with the reptile he holds in the left hand. The hood of the snake peering just above the right shoulder of Śiva, is again noteworthy, as it shows how the future Patañjali is attracted towards the sound of the drum, giving the basic aphorisms for grammar.

In the Chandraśekhara temple at Tiruvakkarai in Tiṇḍivanam taluq of South Arcot district is another beautiful early Chōḷa image of Naṭarāja (Fig. 112). In this, the dance mode is a moment before the raising of the knee fully, to answer the description of *ūrdhvajānu*. It is almost the *ardhaparyāṅka* attitude and we have several Śivas dancing like that in sculpture in Chāḷukya and other varieties. The right hand in the *saṁdamśamudrā* suggests Śiva as the lord



FIG. 99. *Gaṅgādhara*, early Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Mūvarkoil, Koḍumbālūr.

of dance, as the supreme master of the science of *nāṭya*. The drum is also held in a peculiar position to suggest the sound, which rouses the snake coiled around the four arms to raise its hood and listen with eagerness. It is almost as if Patañjali, to be born, is listening to Śiva's own interpretation of the meaning of the fourteen *sūtras* of Vyākaraṇa, emanating from the shake of the drum.

As the tradition of the Naṭarāja of Chidambaram has had a profound influence in all the

neighbouring area, the image of dancing Śiva from Śivakkoḷundīśvara temple at Tirttanagarī (Tiruttinainagar) in Cuddalore taluq (Fig. 101) shows the *jaṭā* of Śiva still spread out, downward on the back and not risen in a swirl to present a background of *jaṭā* as it would seem in composing the gap between one end of the *prabhā* to the other at the top. The Gaṅgā perched on one of the locks is thus almost resting on his left shoulder with her hands clasped in adoration. At the bottom, to the right and left on the pedestal, are two four-



FIG. 100. *Natarāja*, early Chola, 11th century A.D., Kīlakāṭṭūr.

armed Gaṇas, one playing the *pañchamukha-vādyā* and the other, cymbals. The hands removed from the drum and the cymbals taken apart show a simultaneous moment of action and the sure rhythm of Śiva's dance which is meticulously attuned to the beat of the *tāla*. The hand in wonder of the musical figures is as much as to say 'how wonderful is Śiva's dance and how rhythmic!'

In the series of the *Natarāja* type flanked by

Gaṇas, four-armed celestials or ṛishis, in an arrangement of playing a drum or the lute or clanging the cymbals, a great moment of dance rhythm is presented. In the case of *Natarāja* from Tranquebar, where the flanking figures are four-armed celestials, the one to the right, plays the *pañchamukhavādyā*, a five-faced drum, rather difficult to manipulate, but till very recently played in early Chola temples all over Tañjāvur, though now almost fallen into disuse (Fig. 107). A magnificent early Chola



FIG. 101. *Natarāja*, Chōla, 12th century A.D., Tīrttanagari.



FIG. 102. *Natarāja*, early Chōla, 11th century A.D., Tiruvāṇṭūrai.



FIG. 103. *Natarāja*, early Chōla, 11th century A.D., Sēnalūr.

FIG. 104. *Rishi playing pañchamukhavādya for dancing Śiva*, Chōla, 12th century A.D., Vaidīśvarankoil.





FIG. 105. *Natarāja, Chōla, 12th century A.D., Tranquebar (Taraṅgambāḍi).*



FIG. 106 *Rishi with lute as musical accompaniment to Natarāja, Chōla, 12th century A.D., Vaidiśvarāṅkoil.*

FIG. 107. *Four-armed celestial playing pañchamukhavādya for Natarāja, Chōla, 12th century A.D., Tranquebar.*





FIG. 108. *Natarāja dancing ūrdhvatāṇḍava, early Chōla, 11th century A.D., Tiruvāṇṭāḍu.*

pañchamukhavādya, made of copper and well decorated, is in the collection of musical instruments in the Madras Museum. The celestial playing this drum looks up at Natarāja and wonders at the perfection of rhythm, answering every tap of his on the pot drum.

In the case of Natarāja from Vaidīśvaraṅkoil, the flanking figures are both rishis, one four-armed and the other with a single pair of arms. The former plays the *pañchamukhavādya* (Fig. 104) while the latter, holding the *viṇā* in his left hand, is still to adjust himself to play it, so lost is he in the rhythm of the beat of the drum and the footfalls of Natarāja (Fig. 106).

Kāraikkālammaiṃ, a great devotee of Śiva, a beauty transformed into a hag at her own request, the better to concentrate on her devoted play of cymbals for Śiva, and a favourite theme in lithic representations of Natarāja groups, as from Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram, is in metal sometimes independently also fashioned, as in the example from Kuttālam (Fig. 110).

Another magnificent group of Śiva as Natarāja and Śivakāmasundarī, his consort, watching his dance, is from the Nittēśvara temple from Śrīmushṇam (Fig. 113) in Chidambaram taluq. The double arched *prabhā*, with its beautiful series of flames represents one



FIG. 109. *Natarāja dancing ūrdhvajānu, Chola, 12th century A.D., Kuṭṭitalai.*

of the important types of this form. There are several other images with this form of *prabhā* and a wide and beautifully woven web of *jaṭās*, as a complete background, from one end to the other of the top of the arch, immediately above the spread arms. The grace in the disposition of the limbs in dance suggests not only great aesthetic quality, but also real movement in this masterpiece of sculpture.

In the Paṭṭiperumān temple at Perūr in Coimbatore taluq, where also the locks of Śiva are still spread over his back and then rising up to form the swirling *jaṭā* on either side, it is the snake on the right arm, twisting and twirling its body to reach the drum, to the sound of which it attentively responds, that contributes a significant factor, as it hints at the great grammarian Patañjali attracted by the grammatical aphorisms.

FIG. 111. *Natarāja, Chola, 12th century A.D., Kuṭṭitalai.*



FIG. 110. *Kāraikkālammaiṃ, Chola, 13th century A.D., Kuttālam.*





FIG. 112. Naṭarāja, Chōḷa, 12th century A.D., Tiruvakkarai, Tiṇḍivanam Tq., South Arcot Dt.

One of the finest normal representations of Śiva in the *bhujāṅgatrāsita* mode, and closely resembling the famous Śiyāli image of Naṭarāja, is from the Śiva temple at Vilvarāyanattam in Cuddalore taluq. The arrangement of flowers at intervals between the *jaṭās* is most pleasing and the twirl at the terminal of each *jaṭā* is indeed by itself artistic decoration. The mermaid, Gaṅgā, on the *jaṭās* to the right, is the very embodiment of devotion.

In the group of Naṭarāja and Śivakāmi from Thyāgarājasvāmi temple of Tiruvaiyāru in Nāgapattīṇam taluq, the elaboration of the *prabhā* is completely represented in three broad tiers, finally decorated by a long row of flames all around it. The *jaṭā* is equally interesting as a pattern by itself. It is noteworthy that here, also, the little fan-shaped decoration on top, behind either ear, is prominently shown.



FIG. 113. *Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundari, Chola, 12th century A.D., Nitteśvara temple, Śrīmushṇam, Chidambaram Tq.*

In the Agniśvara temple at Tiruppugaḷūr in Nannilam taluq, the lovely Naṭarāja figure (Fig. 114) presents excellent decoration of the *jaṭās*, swirling and rising upwards, which is a type by itself. The web is artistically arranged, but what is noteworthy is that the pattern of *jaṭās* does not move horizontally in wavy fashion, but in semi-circular wavy route, as it surges upwards on either side.

In the Dhanushkoṭīśvara temple from Pañchanadikuḷam in Tirutturaipūṇḍi taluq, the

group of Naṭarāja and Śivakāmi (Fig. 115) presents an excellent example of late Chola work. In this the movement of Naṭarāja in his dance is suggested by the direction of the twirling cloth flying across the stomach to reach the *prabhā*, and the hood of the snake coiled around the right arm, which is not raised up, but horizontally, as if to suck up the mighty blasts raised by the forceful *tāṇḍava* dance.

The Naṭarāja image in the Śaṭṭanādasvāmi temple from Śirkalī (Shīyāḷi) is again an image



FIG. 114. *Natarāja*, Chola, 12th century A.D., Tirupputtalur.

following the Chidambaram tradition, with a two-armed dwarf Gaṇa on either side, one playing the drum and the other sounding the cymbals. The central tassel between the thighs swirls semi-circularly to the left to touch the *prabhā*. This is a late Chola example of the famous Chidambaram type.

In the temple of Paśupatiśvara at Tiruk-kaṇḍiśvaram in Nannilam taluq, the beautiful *Natarāja* figure (Fig. 117) is easily marked by

the elaborate and broad three-banded *prabhāvalī* and the elaborate arrangement of *jaṭās* as in the Tiruvārūr temple. The noteworthy feature is that Gaṅgā is here shown straight on the top of the *makuṭa*, above the peacock feathers. The representation is almost laconic, a human head to represent the goddess of the stream, without her other bodily features shown.

In the magnificent stone sculpture of *Naṭa-*



FIG. 115. *Natarāja and Śivakāmasundarī, Chola, 12th-13th century A.D., Pañchanadikulam.*



FIG. 116. *Natarāja, Chola, 12th century A.D., Vallanūr.*



FIG. 117. *Naṭarāja*, Chola, 12th century A.D., Tirukkandīśvaram.

rāja, from the Śivalokanātha temple from Kīraṇūr (Fig. 118) in Nannilam taluq, which is among the very best lithic representations of *Naṭarāja*, vying with those from the Bṛihadiśvara and Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram temples, though this is earlier, the main point which is noteworthy and suggestive, is that the snake, which has wound itself round the *gajahasta* of Śiva, tries to descend with its hood downwards, to repeat, as it were, what is assured by the *daṇḍahasta* itself, that the raised foot of Śiva is the refuge for the devotee seeking salvation by supplication to it. The foot is also meaningfully bent down, the fingers pointing downwards, almost as if to reach the devotee low down on the ground. There is compassion writ large on the face of the Lord.

Another lithic representation of *Naṭarāja*, an early Chola piece, is an example from the Mayūranāthasvāmi temple at Māyūram (Fig.

119). The snake here, as in the case of the image from the Śivalokanātha temple from Kīraṇūr, descends with its hood downwards as it lies entwined on the *gajahasta*. The hands are closer to the body, as they usually are in stone carving. There is a whole series of wavy *jaṭās* on either side of the figure. The *udara-bandha*, *kaṭisūtra*, *aṅgada* armlets and *pādasaras* indicating tinkling tiny bells that sound the dance rhythm, and the *jaṭāmakūṭa*, are all artistically arranged including the tassels from the *kaṭisūtra* dangling on the right thigh. A three-legged figure in the background, also dancing, may either be Bhṛṅgīrīṭi or Jvarahara.

The simple image from Śaktigīrīśvarar temple from Śeynalūr (Śenganūr) in Kumbakonam taluq, though in the Chidambaram tradition with *jaṭās* spread on the back itself, looks almost circumscribed by the *prabhā*



FIG. 118. *Natarāja, Chōḷa, 12th century A.D., Kīraṇūr.*

around it. The left leg is just being raised, and the long cloth, tied around the stomach does not extend and twirl to reach the *prabhā*. The *daṇḍahasta* is in consonance with the composition of the leg, diagonal rather than horizontal. There is a look of reassurance in the face of Śiva.

In an example preserved in the Tañjāvūr Art Gallery, the arrangement of Śiva's *jaṭās* calls attention (Fig. 120). The swirling *jaṭās* form a network in a regular wavy mode, with garlands of flowers running between the *jaṭās*, also in wavy fashion, composed of long strands of jasmine with large sun flowers breaking the monotony at intervals. At the terminal of one of the *jaṭās*, the mermaid Gaṅgā pulls herself up with hands clasped in adoration.

Another sculpture in metal from the temple of Śiva at Uttattūr (Fig. 121) is specially noteworthy for the rather simple artistic treatment of the *jaṭās*, five on either side spread out in slight wavy contour, two forming loops on top, the whole series surmounted by shorter *jaṭās*, one on either side creating the illusion of a crescent. What is specially noteworthy is the artistic arrangement in either loop of *jaṭās*, of Gaṅgā to the right and a snake to the left, in the most balanced and tasteful composition.

By far the most imposing *Natarāja* of the later phase of Chōḷa art is the one from Amsterdam (Fig. 122) which for size, elegance and artistic treatment is almost unbeaten. The mermaid Gaṅgā here does not face the spectator but diagonally, with her hands clasped in adoration, looks straight at the profile of Śiva's face.

The *Natarāja* from Vallanūr (Fig. 116) is also a late Chōḷa example, specially noteworthy for the straight leap of the flame, and the manipulation of the fingers and toes, almost as in *kathakali* fashion to illustrate *tāṇḍava*, with the great toe of the foot slightly raised and bent, suggesting violent moment. The perfect mastery over the limbs in dance is hereby proclaimed.

Undoubtedly one of the most important early Chōḷa *Natarājas* is the one from Kumāra-vāyalūr, a bronze without the *prabhā* (Fig. 123). Apart from the *Natarāja* from Koḍumuḍi



FIG. 119. *Natarāja, early Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Māyūram.*



FIG. 120. *Natarāja, Chola, 12th century A.D., Tanjāvūr Art Gallery, Tanjāvūr.*

which is a Chola piece from Pāṇḍyan area, this is the only one from the regular Chola territory itself to illustrate the *lalita* mode of Śiva's dance. The moon, snake are prominently shown on the *jaṭās*, the hands in *karihasta* and *abhaya* are almost as in the Tiruvaraṅgulam bronze. The hands holding the drum and flame are not spread out but closer to the body. The tap of the right foot is almost suggested move-

ment in a stolid metal figure. This is indeed an exquisite figure in metal.

Late Chāḷukya

Śiva dancing, as the central figure of a long lintel, exquisitely carved, recovered from Hampi (Fig. 124) as a typical late Chāḷukya piece, represents the deity in the *ūrdhvajānu* pose. But this is an elaboration of the famous



FIG. 121. *Natarāja, Choḷa, 13th century A.D., Uttattūr.*

ūrdhvajānu figure in metal of the Pallava period in the Madras Museum. This sculpture combines the northern and southern elements of dancing Śiva, i.e. the innumerable hands and *Apasmāra-purusha* under the right foot. He carries the *triśūla*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *paraśu*, *ḍamaru* or the drum, the *vṛishbhadvaja* and other attributes, while his main hands, which are broken, are in *karihasta* and probably *abhaya*, as they should be. The *jaṭā* is elaborately worked and a huge *śiraśchakra* is also shown behind the head. Gaṇeśa and Bhṛīṅgiriṭi are dancing, while

even Skanda, mounted on the peacock, enjoys the dance of the bird. Nandikeśvara, represented in human form, plays the drum. It is especially noteworthy here that Nandikeśvara has four arms and carries smaller drums in his other hands. Pārvatī, as Śivakāmasundarī, with an attendant besides her, stands at ease enjoying the dance of Śiva. The entire sculpture, with so many decorative patterns of floriated circles, enclosing as it were, a variety of dance and musical figures, with dance poses and musical instruments so full of variation,



FIG. 122. *Naṭarāja*, Chōḷa, 12th-13th century A.D., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

provides thereby a very interesting background to this main theme of Śiva's dance. It is one of the most important representations of dancing Śiva, with a tribute paid to dance and music through the innumerable figures that form a pattern or border, as it were, above and below the main panel.

How well the Chāḷukyan sculptor enjoyed the music and dance of his day is easily imagined by a look at the bracket figures from Kuruvattī temple, representing not only the quick movement in dance, forming the *karana*s and *aṅga*hāras, but also the various *sthāna*s. The

flutist is still playing and the drummer still sounding the drum, as the dancer stands for a while in a charming pose, recalling Kālidāsa's preference for seeing Mālavikā standing at ease, after the gyrations and dance, rather than the fast movements themselves: *nṛitād asyās sthitam atitarām kāntam rījavāyatārdham*. Whole screens of perforated windows in Chāḷukya temples, like the one from Tripurāntakeśvara at Belgāvi in Chikmagalūr district, show how the Chāḷukya sculptor enjoyed dance as he represented it.

A lintel from the same temple representing



FIG. 123. *Naṭarāja dancing lalita*, early Chōḷa, 10th century A.D., Kumāravāyalūr.

Gajasamhāramūrti on a door lintel, shows Śiva in violent action, again with foot lifted in *ūrdhva-jānu* (Fig. 126). A musical group of figures shown all around, all of them having divers instruments, and a large assembled concourse of devas on both sides, gazing at his *gajahātāṇḍava*, are very pleasing. Even in the previous sculpture from Hampi, the Lokapālas and other devas are shown, all assembling above to watch the impressive dance of Śiva.

A lintel in the museum of the Kannaḍa

Research Institute of Dhārwar University, though unfortunately sadly broken and worn, has yet enough left to show eight-armed Śiva dancing, as the central figure with Brahmā and Viṣṇu on either side, the latter now lost. Nandi jumping almost in an ecstatic dance, between the legs of Śiva, is very interesting. The musical figures at the extreme end, playing the cymbals and keeping time, are vigorously portrayed. Naṭarāja on the lintel is an old tradition (Fig. 125) continued all over the country through the centuries.



FIG. 124. Lintel showing Natarāja in central panel dancing, late Chālukya, 12th century A.D., Hampi, National Museum.

A *kūḍu* of the *śikhara* of the Śiva temple at Degalvalli represents Śiva, ten-armed, loaded with ornamental detail. In between his legs peeps the bull. Devī is seated with hands in *añjali*. A similar figure in a *kūḍu* of the *śikhara* from the Akka-Taṅgiḍguḍi in Belgaum district shows the popularity of the theme in Chālukyan temples. A *makara-toraṇa* of the *maṇḍapa* entrance, in the Rāmaliṅga temple at Dhavalgi in Bijapur district, is a fine example of Chālukya lintel with the central theme as Natarāja's dance in *ūrdhvajānu* mode.

A lovely group of dancing figures, with Śiva in the centre and Brahmā and Viṣṇu on either side, on the lintel of a Chālukya doorway from the Śiva temple at Belgaum is very picturesque. Śiva is dancing in *ūrdhvajānu* and Devī, to his left, watches his performance. There are three



FIG. 125. Doorway with Natarāja on lintel, Galganāth temple, Pattadakal.

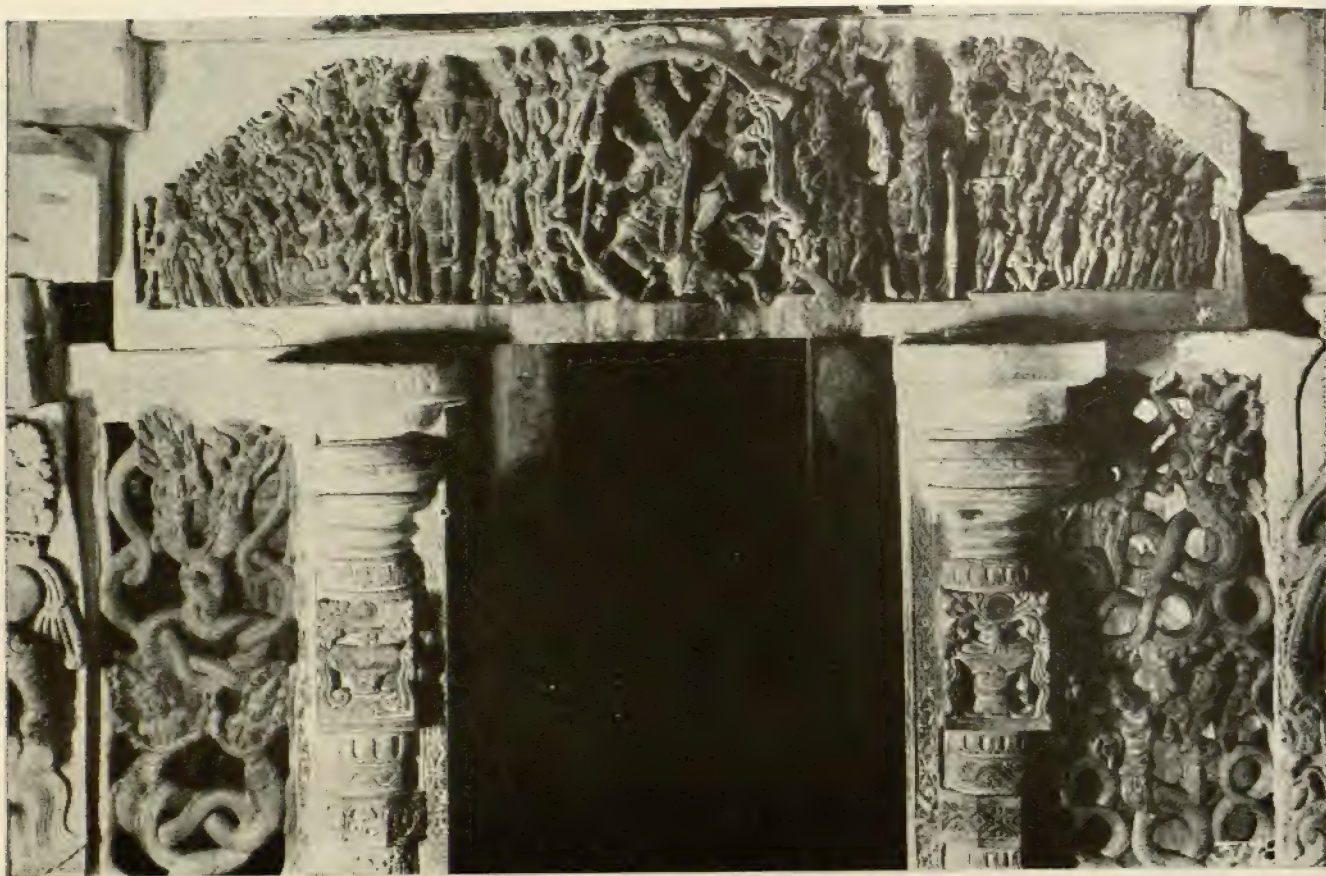


FIG. 126. *Gajāntaka* as central panel of door panel, late Chālukya, 12th century A.D., Tripurāntakeśvara temple, Belgāvi.

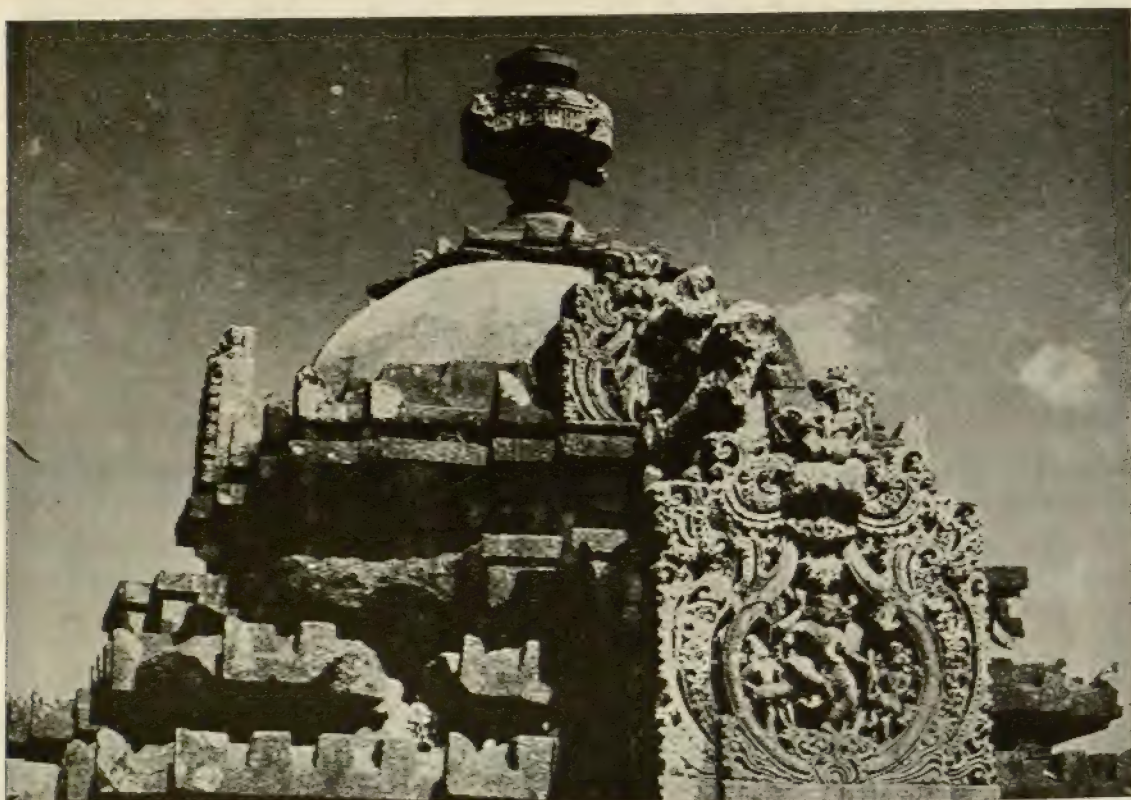


FIG. 127. *Naṭarāja* on *sukhanāsā* of temple *Vimāna*, Hoysala, 12th century A.D., Dodḡadagḡavalli.

drummers at least, all thumping their instruments with great gusto. Bhairava, Kālī and a pair of ṛishis, dance in consonance with Śiva's movements. From the *sukhanāsā* of the *vimāna* of the Siddheśvara temple at Haveri is a multi-armed Śiva dancing again in *ūrdhvajānu*. The

musical accompaniments include the *vīṇā* and the drum. Nandi jumps for joy as he witnesses the dance of his master.

The Mātṛikās dancing in accompaniment have been chosen as the theme for the panels

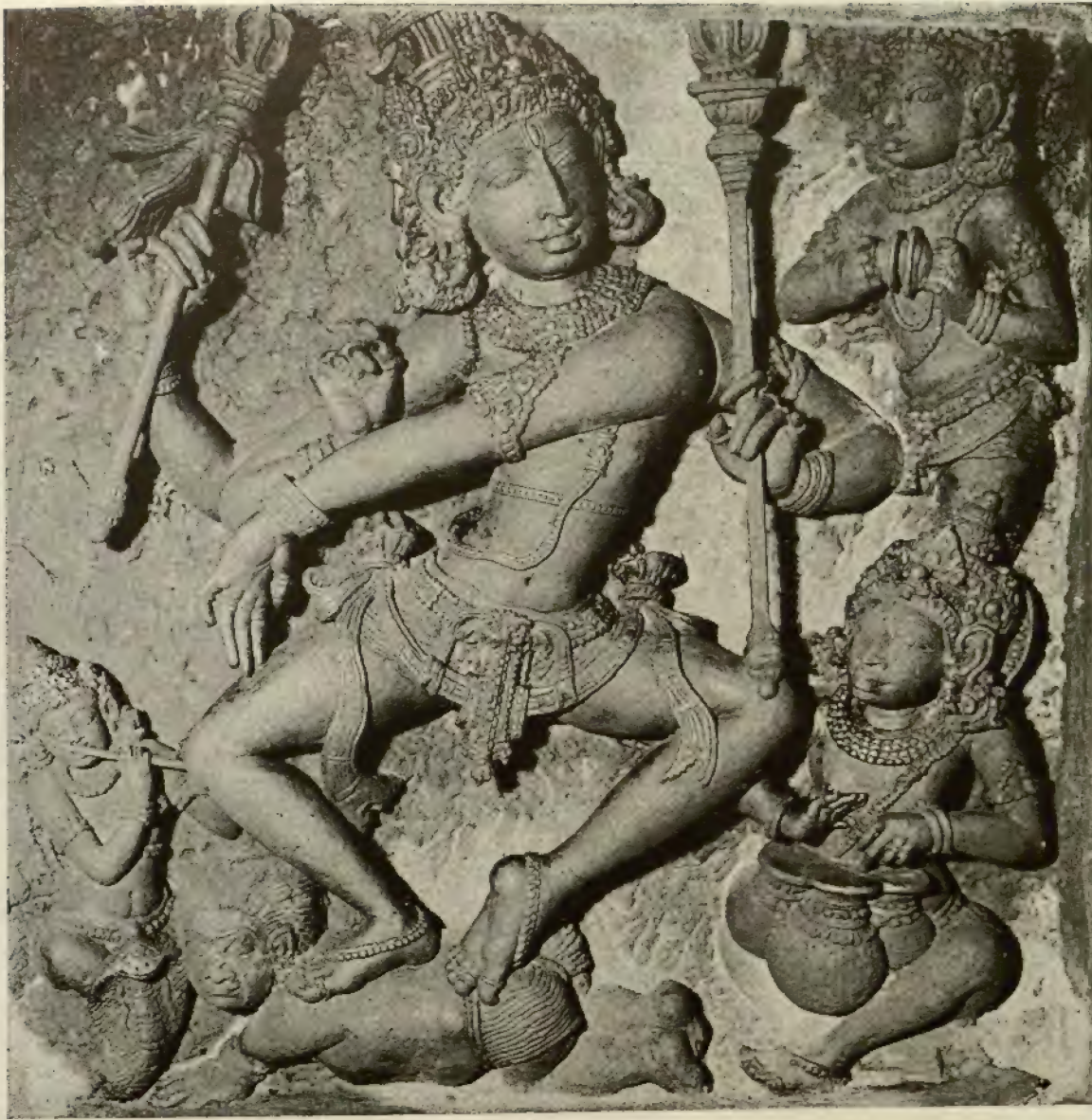


FIG. 128. *Natarāja dancing in central panel of maṇḍapa with Dikpālas around, late Chāḷukya, 11th century A.D., Arāḷguppe.*

of the ceiling of the temple near the suspension bridge of the Gokak Falls in the Belgaum district. Closely associated with the Mātṛikā group, Gaṇeśa is also shown dancing here. But of all the Mātṛikās, the most interesting is eight-armed Chāmuṇḍā with her *kapāla yajñopavīta*, sacred thread composed of skulls, swaying her limbs in violent movements, her sword a crooked *kartarī*, which she carries along with other attributes, like the trident, shield, drum and *khaṭvāṅga*.

From the aesthetic point of view, undoubtedly, the most magnificent late Chāḷukya carving of Natarāja dancing is from the ceiling of the *maṇḍapa* in the temple of Śiva at Arāḷguppe (Fig. 128). Śiva is here shown four-armed, dancing in the *chatura* mode, his principal pair of arms in *gajahasta* and *saṁdamśa* or *āhūyavarada*; the other two arms carrying the *triśūla*. The figure of Apasmāra under his feet seems

not to be perturbed by the thuds on his back. The musical orchestra around Śiva is composed of a flutist, a drummer playing the *trimukhavādya* and one clanging the cymbals to keep time. The decorative element in this sculpture is restrained and charming. The intricate workmanship of the *jaṭās*, the tucking of the moon in the locks of hair, the variation in *kuṇḍala* type of earring suspended from the lobes, *makara* to the right and *nāga* to the left, the elaborate necklet, *kaṭisūtra* with lion-head clasp and tassels and loops, the pearl-composed *yajñopavīta* with artistic clasp, the ribbon decoration even for the trident, and similar details in the case of the decoration of the musical figures, make this the most attractive of late Chāḷukyan examples of Natarāja, as the central theme, surrounded by *Dikpālas* in eight panels all around, from the ceiling of any temple anywhere in the vast Chāḷukyan realm.



FIG. 129. *Natarāja* lowermost panel of *virakkal*, hero memorial stone, late Chālukya, Ron, Dist. Dhārwar.

FIG. 130. *Natarāja* as top figure of *virakkal*, hero memorial stone, late Chālukya, Bettigiri, Distt. Dhārwar.

It is of special interest to note that the *Natarāja* theme was such a favourite in the Western Chālukya area that the warriors who died in battle chose to represent dancing Śiva on even their memorial stones to suggest their predilection for the Śaivite faith. Śiva was their ideal Victor, dancing in his joy of victory. In emulation of this and in the confidence that they would be victors like their Lord, they chose this aspect of Śiva for seeking *Śivasāyujya* or physical amalgamation with the Supreme Lord. Sometimes it is Śiva dancing in *chatura*, as in the top panel of the inscribed hero stone from Ron (Fig. 129) in Dhārwar district, or sometimes it is Śiva dancing as *Gajāntaka*, after his victory over *Gajāśura*, as in the panel of the *Virakkal* from Bettigiri (Fig. 130) where the hero glori-

ously fighting on the battlefield, finally ascends to heaven, with his arms on the shoulders of celestial nymphs, who carry him to Valhalla.

Hoysaḷa

With the weakening of the Western Chālukya power, their powerful feudatories, the Hoysaḷas, ruling from Dorasamudra, asserted themselves. The Hoysaḷas were responsible for embellishing their kingdom with charming temples, so highly embellished and with such intricate design work that their school became a distinct one, though originally inspired by early Chālukya art. Hoysaḷa sculptures are somewhat squat and short and heavily loaded with ornamentation. Nevertheless, they are pleasing to behold.



FIG. 131. Eight-armed *Natarāja* dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*, Hoysala, 12th century A.D., Halebid.

The greatest of the Hoysala kings, Bittiga, was named Vishṇuvardhana, after he was converted to Vaiṣṇavism by Rāmānuja, in the twelfth century. Vishṇuvardhana was responsible for a number of temples of great aesthetic quality. These he created in his kingdom, by building monuments for the deities, with the zeal of a new convert. The temples at Belūr and Halebid are particularly noteworthy for the elaborate carving on their plinths, as well as on the pillar brackets and ceilings. The long rows of elephants, *makaras*, swans, cavaliers, elephant-riders, in several bands on the plinth, arranged in pleasing fashion with a wealth of iconographic details, the themes of *madanikais* on the pillar brackets, and the feminine charm in themes like a girl admiring her beauty in a mirror, talking to a parrot perched on her wrist, now just from the bath adjusting her garment, and now pausing a while after a round of dance, now tuning the strings of the lute or standing under a flowering tree to gather befitting fragrant flowers for her braid, are all fascinating, chiselled with patience and devo-

tion by master sculptors. The names are inscribed, as at Dodḍagaḍḍavalli, but this is not an invariable feature, as the sculptor in India usually remained anonymous.

The old tradition of representing Śiva prominently in a circular *kūḍu* on the top of the *vimāna* is continued in the Hoysala monuments. At Dodḍagaḍḍavalli, Śiva dances in *ūrdhvajānu*, with drummers on either side, the right hand is lifted up and shows *alapadma*, while the left hand is allowed to hang down in *latā* fashion. Since Bharata has allowed the liberty of using the hands according to the wishes of the dancer (*prayogavaśagau hastau*), *ūrdhvajānu* can be easily determined from the position of the legs (Fig. 127).

In the Hoysaleśvara temple at Halebid, Śiva is shown dancing eight-armed, with his right leg lifted up almost to produce *ūrdhvajānu*. The other, at ease in *latā* fashion. To an extent, it produces *daṇḍapaksha*, if only the right hand had not been bent upward. But as it is a moment of action in between the two *karaṇas*, it would be proper to place it nearer both. In the other hands he carries the *śūla*, *kunta* and *khaṭvāṅga*; unfortunately the other arms are broken and lost. A chaplet of skulls is a *jaṭā-makuṭa*, most elaborately done up. The weird little snakes, coiled in and around the ear lobes, the general treatment of the necklace, the elaborate jewelled *yajñopavīta*, also swaying in the dance, are all exquisite work. There is as usual in Hoysala sculpture a floriated canopy above the dancing figure. There is no *Apasmāra* under his foot, and the multiplicity of arms clearly shows the northern tradition, which is accepted in the Deccan.

On the other hand, in the Chennakeśava temple at Belūr, Śiva dances in *chatura* on *Apasmāra*. Here also, he is eight-armed. His two normal hands are in *abhaya* and *daṇḍahasta*. The *abhayahasta* carries the *akṣhamālā* also. This is again suggestion of Śiva as a teacher. This aspect is reiterated by the book that he carries in one of his hands to the right. The drum in one of the left hands suggests the musical accompaniment to his dance. In addition to all this, he carries a sword, a trident, a snake and a skull cap. Near his feet, a drummer, to the right, plays a small drum of the *huḍukka* type, while, to the left, a woman dances in what may be a sword dance. This may even be to suggest that Śiva is not only the master of classical, but also of folk dance.

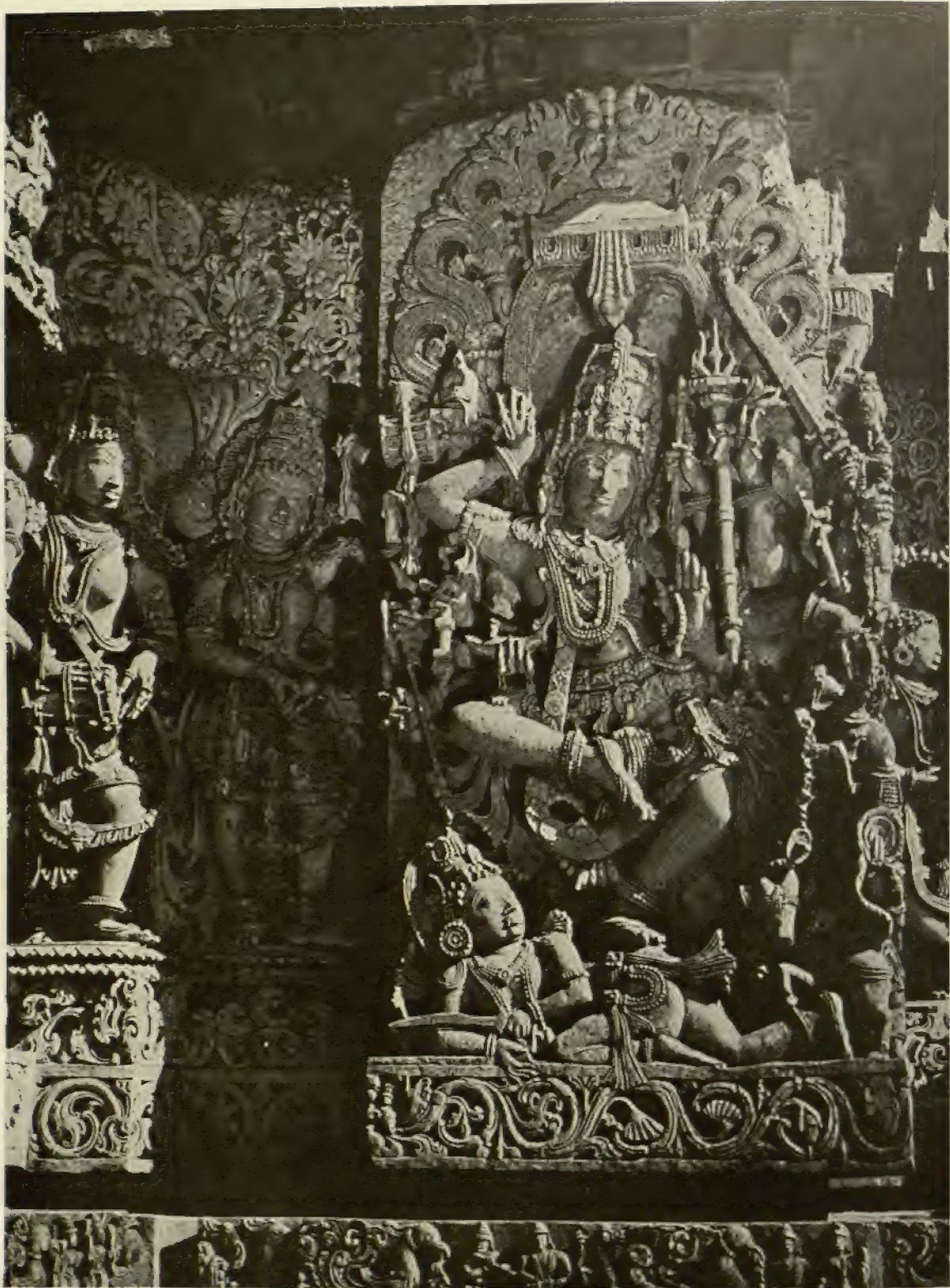


FIG. 132. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu, Hoysala, 12th century A.D., Halebidu.

In the Hoysalesvara temple, there is another multi-armed Natarāja form of Śiva, this time with twelve hands. His left leg is raised almost to create the ūrdhvajānu. It is probably a moment between *alātaka* and ūrdhvajānu, as well as *siṃhavikrīḍitam*, and it has the semblance of all the three. In his multiple arms, he carries the *triśūla*, the sword, *khaṭvāṅga*, *kapāla*, *nāga* and *akṣhamālā* in his hand in *abhaya*. There are musicians at his foot, a drummer, a flutist, a cymbal player and so forth. Bhṛīṅgi or Atirik-

tāṅga Bhairava, in almost the appearance of a skeleton, dances near his foot, very close to the lotus which supports him. The elaborate ornamentation is characteristic of Hoysala sculptures (Fig. 131).

Yet another dancing figure of Śiva from the Hoysalesvara temple shows him resting his right foot in ūrdhvajānu, as in the case of another sculpture from the same temple, with the principal right hand raised up and one of the left

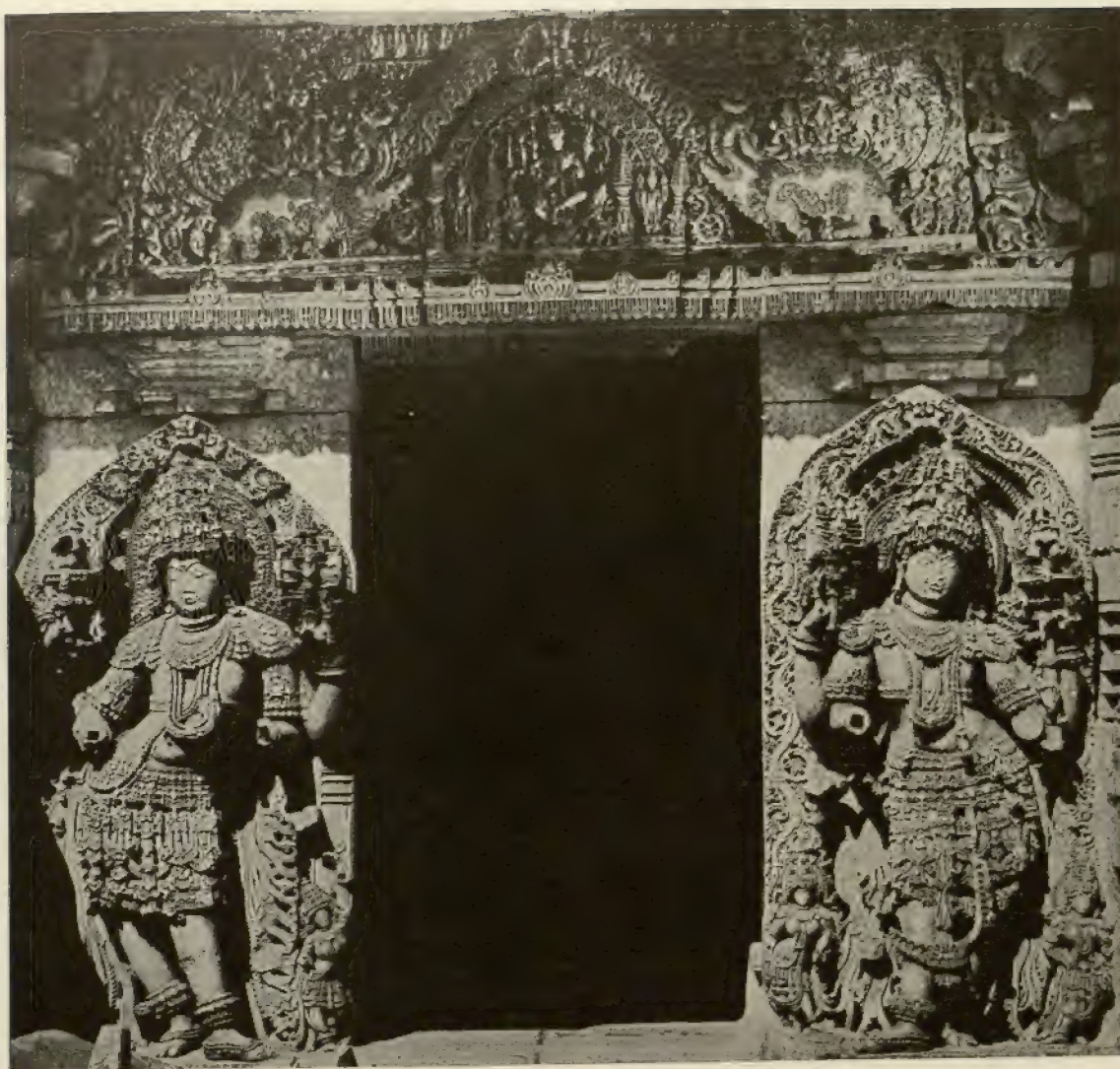


FIG. 133. Śiva on an elaborately worked lintel on doorway, Hoysaḷa, 12th century A.D., in temple, Halebīḍ.

hands, similarly, in *latā* fashion allowed to hang free. It almost suggests *daṇḍapakṣa*. That he is the master of dance is here especially suggested by an *akṣhamālā*, resting on the thumb of his hand in *abhaya*. He is twelve-armed and carries the drum, *khaṭvāṅga*, shield, arrow, *ankuśa*, *triśūla*, *nāga* and *kapāla*. Here he is shown dancing on *Apasmāra*, with Nandi jumping on the Asura with force, almost as if to aid Śiva in destroying the source of ignorance (Fig. 132).

The Hoysalesvara temple is such a mine of iconographic wealth that there is no dearth of figures of various forms of deities carved here. One more Natarāja, different from the rest, shows Śiva almost completely in *ūrdhvajānu*. His principal hands are in *abhaya* and *daṇḍahasta*, with his knee nearly raised, to make it *ūrdhvajānu*. There is again the *akṣhamālā* on the thumb of his *abhayahasta* to suggest that he is the master of music and dance. The sword, *triśūla*, *vajra*, *ḍamaru*, *khaṭvāṅga* and *kapāla* adorn his other arms. There are three Gaṇas at his feet, two playing the drum and another sounding the

cymbals. *Apasmāra* is absent here and Śiva dances on the ground.

The importance of the theme of Natarāja in the Hoysalesvara temple can easily be understood when we study the lintels and doorways and the prominent *kūḍu* decoration on the *śikhara*, containing a central panel of Śiva dancing. In the Hoysalesvara temple, one of the door lintels has a charming carving of great intricate design and decoration, representing Śiva's *tāṇḍava*, poised on *Apasmāra* (Fig. 133). Śiva is multi-armed, in *ūrdhvajānu* or *ardhaparyāṅka*, as we may call it in sculptural parlance. Brahmā and Viṣṇu are shown flanking him in separate small niches, with an elaborate semicircular *tiruvāṣi* decoration, with *kīrtimukha* on top. The *makara* decoration on either side is so elaborate that it shows Varuṇa and Varuṇānī repeated on either side, both on *makaras*, which form a decoration apparently for the central panel. A panel on another lintel on the eastern entrance of the Hoysalesvara temple, almost similar in every respect,

has some elaborate carvings and the central theme of Natarāja dancing. The musical figures are very elegantly executed. Towards the terminals of the lintels and the elaborate floriated tails of the *makaras*, there is a dance group on one side composed of performing dancers and musicians on the other, probably Sarasvatī herself, with the *vīṇā* in her hand being one of them. The *dvārapālas* down below are magnificent creations of the Hoysaḷa sculptor.

At Belūr, in the Āṇḍāl temple, there is a very beautiful carving of Bhairava (Fig. 134), dancing almost in *ūrdhvajānu*. Bhairava is provided with eight arms, some of which are lost. He carries the drum, shield, bow, the cut head of a demon, a sword, spear and so forth. Though naked, he is completely embellished with jewels, a long *yajñopavīta* and *chhannavīra*. He dances on the corpse of the demon whose cut head is held in his hand. The musical figures at his feet, including a flutist and a cymbal-player, are all emaciated and skeleton-like.

As an example of the dance figures on the top *kūḍu* niche of the *śikhara*, we can mention a whole series against each tier of the *vimāna*. It shows the *aṣṭabhairavas*, one on top of the other, dancing multi-armed with their respective attributes, all of them in *ardhaparyāṅka*.

The spirit of dance is again well represented in Hoysaḷa sculptures where, apart from Śiva, the Lord of dance, Viṣṇu, progenitor of dance, is made to dance with the *vīṇā* in one hand and with the *śaṅkha* and *chakra* in the other two. It is exactly like Śiva dancing as Virabhadra, along with the Mātṛikās and Gaṇeśas. When we recall that *Kaiśikī* and other *vṛttis* were created by Viṣṇu, by the singularly charming sway of his limbs as he moved in the waters of the deluge to destroy Madhu and Kaiṭabha, it is natural that he should be given a place of the highest importance as one of the *paramāchāryas* or the teachers of the art of dance. This is a sculpture at the Keśava temple at Somanāthpur.

Another sculpture from the Hoysaḷeśvara temple at Halebīḍ gives probably the very best example in Indian art of Gaṇeśa dancing, and from the numerous literary references to Gaṇeśa's dance, we know how enthusiastically he had tried to follow the movement of his father as the supreme Dancer. Gaṇeśa's *kuṭṭita* of the leg, as he dances almost in



FIG. 134. Bhairava dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*, Hoysaḷa, 12th century A.D., Āṇḍāl temple, Belūr.

vikshiptaka, is really most interesting, presenting a childlike figure, dwarfish, dancing in glee. The dance expression of pure joy of Bhṛṅgi or that of even Skanda in dance are examples of children dancing. On the ceiling, amidst the *Dikpālas*, Śiva is invariably represented in the central panel in Śiva temples, as in Viṣṇu temples, dancing. Here again, it is almost the same *vikshiptaka* pose, approaching *ūrdhvajānu*, that occurs. The *Dikpālas* and their queens, on their respective vehicles, are shown in separate panels all around.

Brahmā being the master of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, he passed it on to Taṇḍu and Bharata. It goes without saying that his consort, Sarasvatī, should dance charmingly. One of the most beautiful examples of Sarasvatī dancing is from the Hoysaḷeśvara temple. The *vīṇā*, originally in her hands, is broken and lost, and she carries her other attributes like *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa* and the rest. She dances gracefully. The *abhaya* hand, which should have carried also the *akṣhamālā*, has lost it. The sculpture by



FIG. 135. *Natarāja* bronze, Eastern Chāḷukya-Kākatīya transition, 11th-12th century A.D., Drākshārāma.

itself is one of the most lovely from the aesthetic point of view. The musicians, drummers and cymbal players, are mutilated. It is a male that plays the drum and a female sounds the cymbals. It cannot be that Durgā, who eternally watches Śiva's dance, would not dance for a while. In fact, she does dance and one of the great dances of Śiva is *Kālikātāṇḍava*, to keep pace with her. She finally accepted defeat at the hands of Naṭarāja, only when he lifted up his leg in *lalāṭatilaka* when, out of modesty, she refrained to follow suite and accepted defeat. A sculpture from the Lakshminārāyaṇa temple at Nuggihalḷi is Durgā dancing. Durgā is the same as Nārāyaṇī and she is the Nārāyaṇī śakti of Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa was one of the pioneers of this art, and what is the wonder that she excels in the art she created! Where it is a violent dance, it is not to the sound of soft cymbals, but here is a need for more of drums and a greater din. There are thus two drummers flanking the central figure. It is not *lāsya*, but *tāṇḍava*, though the dancer is feminine. From the Hoysaḷeśvara temple at Halebīd is yet another important sculpture, where it is not Durgā dancing, but Kālī herself, wearing the weird chaplet of skulls on her dressed up

braid, a garland of skulls as *yajñopavīta*, carrying in her eight arms different attributes, like the sword, trident, wheel, book, snake, drum, skull-cap and *khaṭvāṅga*. She looks frightful indeed. On her feet, there are heavy anklets, which jingle in consonance with the beat of the drum by drummers on either side. It is almost the beginning of the *tāṇḍava* which has not yet gathered momentum.

Kākatīya

Another family of feudatories of the Chāḷukyas, that became independent and continued ruling in their own right, was that of the Kākatīyas. Their capital was Wāraṅgal. The Kākatīyas were, however, feudatories not of the Western Chāḷukyas but of the Eastern. They, however, continued Chāḷukya traditions. The distinct difference between the art of the Hoysaḷas and Kākatīyas is essentially because of following Eastern Chāḷukya tradition. While the Hoysaḷa sculptor revels in elaborate ornamentation and intricate design, the Kākatīya craftsman is comparatively simple. The gleam of polish on the fine pillars of the Kākatīya temples is a feature common to both the Kākatīyas and the Hoysaḷas. But the figures are definitely more elongated and slender, less loaded with ornament, and quite unlike the short and stumpy Hoysaḷa figures loaded with decorative details.

To illustrate this point, a sculpture in metal of dancing Śiva is an appropriate example (Fig. 135). It is an image from the Śiva temple at Drākshārāma. Though the temple itself was built by the earlier Eastern Chāḷukyan king Bhīma, this sculpture, which is the very image of simplicity and somewhat stylised in workmanship, though of the folk pattern, points to late Chāḷukyan or more probably Kākatīya date. This is a sculpture from the border line of the end and beginning respectively of the Eastern Chāḷukyas and the Kākatīyas in about the 12th century A.D. The *jaṭās* are arranged more in the Orissan fashion, and Orissan influences in Eastern Chāḷukyan territory are well known. The drum and the flame in the upper pair of arms, the *abhaya* and *gajahasta* for the normal pair, the lion clasp for the *kaṭisūtra* is all a southern feature. The *makarakuṇḍala* for the ears is almost in Orissan style. The central loop of the *kaṭisūtra* is a characteristic of all Chāḷukyan figures which survives in later Kākatīya art.

One of the finest sculptures of the Kākatīya

school is from Wāraṅgal and shows carving on the lintel of a doorway of a Śiva temple (p. 26, Fig. 2). Now preserved in the National Museum, it is an intricately carved *makaratoraṇa*, with typical Chālukya *makara* on either side, rich in floriated tail, with weird gaping mouth, from which issues a *torāṇa* of many arches. There are three beautiful dancing figures: the central one is Śiva dancing as Naṭarāja and the other two are Brahmā and Viṣṇu also dancing. Śiva's dance is a popular theme, and as he is the lord of dance, his is an exposition of all that is meant in dance. He is shown multi-armed, in *ardhaparyāṅka*, which is only an earlier moment of *ūrdhvajānu*, while the knee is not completely raised up. Brahmā, wearing the beard in Chālukyan sculpture is to represent his *pitā-maha* aspect in contrast to the usual aspect of *padmaja*, born of the navel lotus of Viṣṇu, as in carvings from further south. His dance is to emphasise the creation of *nāṭyaśāstra* by Brahmā at the instance of the gods themselves. With the elements of the four *Vedas*, he created a fifth *Veda*, Nāṭya, with all the sciences, epics and arts embodied in it, with the literary portion from the *Rig Veda*, the music from the *Sāma Veda*, gestures from *Yajurveda* and emotions from *Atharva*. Brahmā created a noble and pleasant art, which would be welcomed by one and all. This being Brahmā's own creation, it is right that he should be represented dancing and extending the meaning of his own creation.

The dance of Viṣṇu is again significant, as it is the graceful movements of the limbs of Viṣṇu, while he fought Madhu and Kaiṭabha, that gave rise to the *Kaiśikī* and other *vṛttis*, which are so important an element in *nāṭya*. So Viṣṇu also, as the *āchārya* of *nāṭya*, has shown its great importance in relation to the *vṛttis*. *Tāṇḍava*, as the highest, and *lāsya*, so difficult for performance by man, and so sweet that it should be attempted only by a woman, is here vividly explained in the dance of Śiva. This sculpture is almost an epitome of the significance of dance itself.

There is another sculpture in the Hyderabad Museum, on a ceiling panel from Wāraṅgal (p. 76, Fig. 6). It represents Sarasvatī dancing on the swan. Sarasvatī has eight arms and in addition, her other attributes like *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, etc. She also carries the *vīṇā*. There are musicians and attendant *chaurī*-bearers flanking her. There is Indra playing the flute, Śachī or Rati dancing and performing *abhinaya* on one side through

the language of gesture and the drummer playing his musical instrument. The inclusion of the swan (*haṁsa*) itself is very significant. The song of the swan is described by poets as very sweet. The swan is the symbol of self-realisation and the highest attainment of knowledge, which accounts for the term *haṁsa* to denote seers. The *vīṇā* is a gem, but not from the ocean, as given in the *Mṛichchhakaṭika*—*vīṇā hi nāma asamudrotthitam ratnam*, producing the sweetest strains of music. The music of one, inspired and lost in music, in the same way as dance, offered in a spirit of dedication to God, is a means of salvation. Dance and musical literature, attributed to Bharata, is also a sure step towards the goal of attaining the Almighty. It is in this spirit that all this is combined by making *vāk*, or Sarasvatī with *vīṇā*, dance on a swan.

The other sculptures from the same ceiling of a *maṇḍapa* of the Rāmappa temple at Pālampet show the dance of Varuṇa (p. 75, Fig. 5), Vāyu and other deities. The central panel is the glory of Śiva's dance. We have already observed that Śiva dances amidst Mātṛikās and also amidst Dikpālas. He dances amidst Bhairavas also. It is for creating a mood for dance and suggesting how the gods, like Bhairava, Vāyu and Indra play instruments and keep time as Śiva dances. With the tempo for dance increasing, the principal deities, like the Dikpālas also join in individual appreciation of the great art, which depicts, as in a mirror, all that we see in life. Varuṇa dances multi-armed, carrying several attributes, like the *pāśa*, *aṅkuśa*, *kunta*, *daṇḍa*, *nāga*, *dhanus*, in addition to the *akṣhamālā* on his hand in *saṁdamśa* or *vyākhyāna*. There are musicians and *chaurī*-bearers flanking him. His vehicle, the *makara*, is seated near his feet. Similarly in the dance of Vāyu, there is his vehicle, the deer, standing close to his feet. It is significant that Vāyu carries the flute in his left hand, to suggest how the flow of the wind through the holes of the bamboo reeds, creates soft music. There is similarly Chandra dancing with the vehicle, the horse, at his feet. The musicians and drummers are there, all of them carrying the bow and a bunch of arrows, probably the flowery arrows, meant as music and dance, to excite and madden them as by the action of Cupid's arrows.

In the Rāmappa temple at Pālampet, there is a beautiful lintel on the doorway of the sanctum, representing Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, in the company of the Mātṛikās and Gaṇeśa.



FIG. 136. Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, Kākatiya, 12th century A.D., from ceiling of Rāmappa temple, Pālampet, Hyderabad Museum.

Chāmuṇḍā, who begins the series, and Gaṇeśa, who ends it, are equally hilarious in their dance. The other Mātṛikās are just commencing the dance, sway their bodies in lovely flexions, but their dance is yet to begin. Nandi is seated at one end, to watch the dance. The *chauri*-bearers, flanking Śiva and moving the fly whisks gently, remind us of the courtesans of Ujjayinī, pictured softly attending on Mahākāla, as he dances in the evening.

Śiva dancing amidst the Mātṛikās is a popular theme. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* refers to the mothers joining to swell the dance movement of Śiva, or Kālabhairava, who dances amidst them on the crematorium. In such representations, Chāmuṇḍā usually has one of her hands in *sūchīmukha*, near the chin, connoting wonder. This is really expressive.

Again from the Rāmappa temple is another ceiling slab that gives a complete picture of Śiva dancing on Apasmāra (Fig. 136), with the *śūla* in two of his hands, and holding other attributes, like the snake, the drum, the *khaṭvaṅga*, the *khaḍga* and so forth, in his other arms. He dances in sculptural fashion, in *ardha-paryāṅka*. The bull Nandi peeps from behind his legs. There are *chauri*-bearers flanking him as well as the drummers and musicians. Brahmā and Viṣṇu are on either side, with their hands clasped in adoration. This sculpture probably portrays Śiva as the destroyer of ignorance, dancing in the joy of the victory of light over darkness as the figure struck on the

prongs of the trident appears to be Andhaka. Viṣṇu and Brahmā, on either side, suggest how the science of *nāṭya*, propagated by Śiva, has its origin in the movements of the limbs of the one and in the codification of the text by the other.

Redḍi

In Śrīśailam, there are several low reliefs of the time of the Redḍis, slightly earlier than the Vijayanagara period. A frieze here is very interesting for the picturesque way in which the *sandhyātāṇḍava* of Śiva is represented (Fig. 137). Though Śiva is shown multi-armed and without Apasmāra under his foot in the northern tradition of the Chālukyas, which is here followed, the dance itself is in the normal *ānandatāṇḍava* pose. Brahmā and Viṣṇu flank Śiva, one keeping time and the other playing the drum. Shaṇmukha plays the drum *pushkara* and Nandi the *mardala*. Sarasvatī has the *viṇā* in her hand and is thrumming the strings. Yet another to play the *viṇā* is a Kinnarī. Towards the end of the panel is three-legged Bhṛṅgīrīṭi, but not emaciated, as we usually know him to be. He also has the *viṇā* in his hand. There are two unusual musical figures here, Gaṇeśa, playing the flute instead of Indra, and Hanumān sounding the cymbals. Both are very earnestly manipulating the musical instruments and the frieze itself is another unusual and refreshingly interesting example. It should be recalled that Hanumān, according to tradition, is as great a preceptor of *Gāndharva veda*, as of *Vyākaraṇa*.



FIG. 137. *Ganeśa playing flute while other celestials play orchestra for Śiva dancing, Redḍi, 14th century A.D., Śrīśailam.*



FIG. 138. *Sandhyātāṇḍava of Śiva, rock-cut, Redḍi, 14th century A.D., Śrīśailam.*

Another frieze shows Śiva striding on Apas-māra in his dance, as bearded Brahmā keeps time, Vishṇu plays the drum, and Devī, unusually four-armed, claps her hands, holding a mirror and lotus in her additional pair of hands, while Nandikeśvara holds a *ghaṭa* or pot (Fig. 138).

Vijayanagara

In the fourteenth century, the brothers Harihara and Bukka were responsible for establishing the kingdom of Vijayanagara, which soon developed and became a mighty empire, stemmed the tide of Muhammadan invasions in the south and ushered in a new phase of art, mostly following the southern traditions. The Chālukya influence, through the Kākatīyas and the Hoysaḷas, is easily discerned in the Telugu and Canarese areas respectively; but, with the lapse of time and the growth of a great empire, the southern traditions began to dominate, and that is how we find Vijayanagara art mostly in the Tamil tradition. Still, it cannot be denied that in the heart of the empire at Hampi, Lepākshī, Penukoṇḍa, Tāḍpatri, Pushpagiri and several other places, there is a subtle aroma of the Chālukya idiom.

The sculpture in the Śivakeśava temple at Pushpagiri represents a very early phase of

Vijayanagara art. There is here a carving, which, though representing the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of Śiva, echoes somewhat the *karaṇa nikuñchita* reversed. The left hand is in *karihasta* and the right in *abhaya*. The other hands carry the attributes like *śūla*, *ḍamaru*, *nāga* and so forth.

Another sculpture, from the same temple, shows Śiva dressing himself for the dance. He is adorning his earlobes with a *kuṇḍala* and fixing up *kinḱinīs* or small tinkling bells on his feet for keeping time in dance (Fig. 139). It is almost to show that these two jewels have slipped down and he is arranging them, as we find the drummer and the flutist busily engaged in the musical accompaniment as Śiva dances. This is one of the most interesting sculptures in the representation of Śiva as a dancer, as it shows the element of *āhārya* or decoration and dressing, with special emphasis. This and a few rare sculptures, representing the adorning of Durgā with similar jingling anklets on her foot, as from Abaneri in the Amber museum from Rājasthān, represent the aspect of *āhārya* which is so important in dance. It is tasteful appropriate dress or *nepathya*, as specially directed by Kālidāsa in his *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *viralanepathya*, in tune with the dance, that is essential, and is shown here. In the *nāṭya-maṇḍapa* of the Lepākshī temple of Virabhadra, there is a whole galaxy of gods carved on the



FIG. 139. Śiva adorning himself for dance, Vijayanagara, 14th century A.D., Pushpagiri, Andhra Pradesh.

pillars, with Śiva as the principal dancing figure. The others are Viṣṇu sounding the drum, Brahmā keeping time, Indra playing the flute, Rambhā dancing in accompaniment, Tuṁburu thrumming a stringed instrument, Sarasvatī playing the *vīṇā* and so forth. The dancing figure of Śiva here is represented in *ūrdhvaṅgu*. He has the drum and the flames in the upper hands, while one hand is in *abhaya* and the other as if resting on a knee tending towards *latā* or *dolā*. He dances on *Apasmāra*. This is a typical Vijayanagara piece, but the dance is not the normal type.

Perūr, near Coimbatore, has a very important sculpture in a well embellished *maṇḍapa*, where, on each pillar, there is a beautiful sculpture in the best Vijayanagara tradition. One of them represents Śiva with his right foot raised in the *lalāṭatilaka* mode. He is sixteen-armed and is specially portrayed, playing the



FIG. 140. Śiva dancing *lalāṭatilaka*, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Tenkāṣī.

drum even as he dances. The old lady Kārai-kālammaiṃyār is depicted just below his feet, clapping her hands to keep time. Śiva dances on *Apasmāra*, with Skanda and Viṣṇu on either side, one keeping time and the other sounding the drum. The same theme is represented almost in the same way in an ivory carving, of the time of Tirumala Nāyak of Madurai, now preserved in the Śrīraṅgam Museum. This is again the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of Śiva, with Viṣṇu and Brahmā on either side. Devī watches the dance, Tuṁburu, with one of his hands raised, adores the Lord of dance, as he holds the *vīṇā* in his other hand. A rishi, probably Bharata, lost in admiration of Śiva's dance, has closed his eyes and clasped his hands in appreciation. In the south, the tradition of Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda, as witnesses of Śiva's dance at Chidambaram is so great, that there is a small plaque showing these two great sages as incarnations of Śeṣha, the serpent



FIG. 141. Śiva's dance on a snake, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., painting, Tiruvallañjuḷi, Tañjāvūr Distt.

FIG. 142. Vishnu, Indra, Brahmā and Sarasvatī playing orchestra for dancing Śiva, painting, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Tiruvallañjuḷi, Tañjāvūr Distt.





FIG. 143. Śiva dancing to the joy of the ṛishis watching, painting, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Tiruvallaṅḡuḷi.



FIG. 144. Śiva dancing and Devi watching, painting, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Tiruvallaṅḡuḷi.

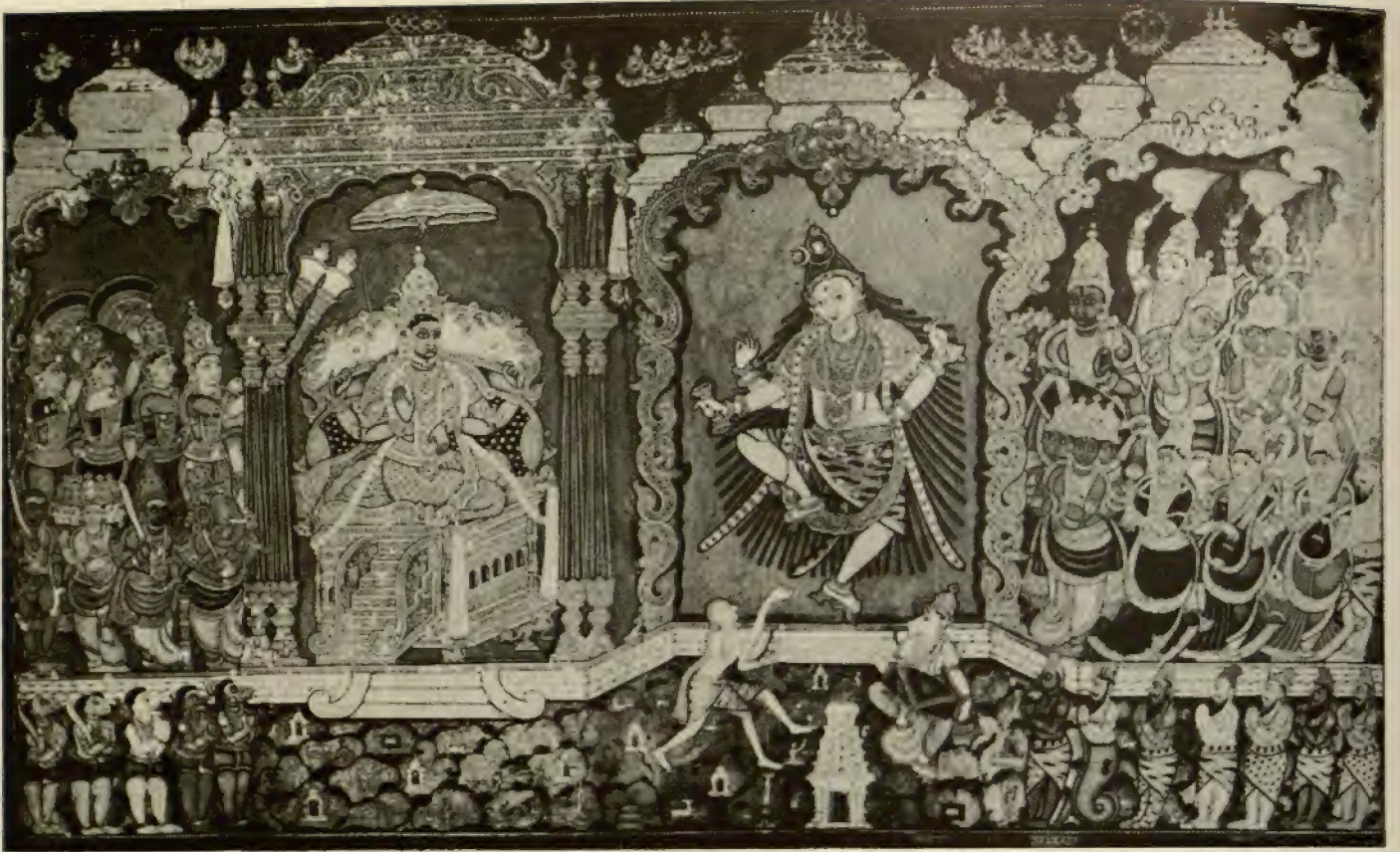


FIG. 145. Śiva dancing sandhyātāṇḍava with celestial musicians as Devī watches from her throne, Mysore school of painting, 18th century A.D.

couch of Viṣṇu turned into Patañjali, indicated by the snake hoods over his *jaṭās* and the coils below his waist, and Vyāghrapāda, with the paws of a tiger, which he especially beseeched God to provide him, to enable him to easily gather *Bilva* leaves for worship.

Yet another sculpture from Perūr is Gajātāṇḍavamūrti. In this form of dancing Śiva one of his legs is usually raised and bent. He has eight arms and the hide of the elephant is made to look almost like a flaming halo around him, with the elephant head below his foot, almost taking the place of Apasmāra. In this same dance mood of Śiva, the Perūr temple provides us another lovely sculpture, Gaṇeśa dancing on the mouse, his vehicle. His feet thump on the back of the animal, like Śiva's on Nandi, in Bengal sculptures. Short, eight-armed, and with his trunk running vertically, though curled, this Gaṇeśa is a very interesting carving.

Among the paintings at Lepākshī, there is a fine representation of Naṭarāja in the normal ānandatāṇḍava attitude. Kālāntaka, another panel on the ceiling of the *ardha maṇḍapa*, is represented almost like Naṭarāja. Kāla himself is made to look like Apasmāra, on whom Śiva



FIG. 146. Devī keeping time clapping hands, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Trivandrum Museum.

FIG. 147. Devī keeping time playing cymbals, Nāyak, 17th century A.D., Trivandrum Museum.



FIG. 148. Śiva dancing sandhyātāṇḍava with celestial musicians as Devī watches from her throne, Mysore school, 18th century A.D., National Museum.

is dancing. This is a fine example of Vijayanagar work.

Nāyak

The Nāyaks, originally vassal kings under the Vijayanagara emperors, slowly asserted themselves with the weakening of the empire, after the battle of Tallikoṭa. Powerful Nāyak kings, like Tirumala Nāyak of Madurai, Śevappa Nāyak of Tañjāvūr, Chinna Bomma Nāyak of Vellore, and others, are noted for their great contributions in fostering every branch of fine arts, architecture, sculpture, music, dance and literature. To this period belong several sculptures of Naṭarāja, illustrating the late phase of

art portraying the theme. The finest representation of Naṭarāja, in the *ānandatāṇḍava* pose, but with the leg transposed in accordance with the tradition of Naṭarāja in the silver hall, *Rajatasabhā* or *Vellīambalam*, is at the entrance, near the *dhvajastambha* of the Mīnākshī-Sundareśvara temple at Madurai. As usual, the greatest prominence is given to the central figure of Naṭarāja and the other figures, forming the musical group, are shown at the bottom.

The sculptor has never lost an opportunity of illustrating this theme and even tiny figures in other parts of the temple delineate it. One such is from the same temple, Śiva dancing in

the normal pose, the left leg raised up, Śivakāmasundarī standing beside him, Nandī playing the drum, and Kāraikkālammaiār, to the right, unafraid of a huge snake with its hood raised; on the contrary, her face beaming with a smile, she ecstatically plays the cymbals. Even Apasmāra, under the foot, seems to enjoy the music and dance. From the temple at Tenkāśi, comes a Naṭarāja of this period, dancing with his legs raised up in the *lalāṭa-tilaka* attitude. It is the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of Śiva who is sixteen-armed. He carries attributes like the drum, arrow, noose, sword, trident, fire, skull-cap, goad, shield, bow, bell and *nandidhvaja*. His main left hand is in *gajahasta*. The famous saints, Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda, are on either side of Śiva.

From the same temple, there is an extremely lovely carving of Śiva in *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, with ten arms. Here also, he carries attributes, like the drum, sword, fire, *nandidhvaja*. Enthusiastically Viṣṇu plays the drum and Brahmā keeps time. This is one of the most charming sculptures of this period, illustrating the Nāyak phase (Fig. 140). The ivory piece at Śrīraṅgam, also illustrating the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of twelve-armed Śiva, is only a poor semblance of the Tenkāśi image.

From Devīpaṭṭiṇam in Rāmnād taluq comes a Naṭarāja from the Śiva temple, illustrating the Nāyak phase. Śiva is shown dancing in a normal way, but without the swirling *jaṭās* and with emphasis on the peacock feathers on the crest. An interesting point here is that Naṭarāja has a companion in dancing Kālī. It illustrates the contest between Śiva Naṭarāja and Kālī who crosses her legs in *pādasvastika*. She is illustrated as Nārāyaṇī, carrying conch and disc, as Durgā generally does. She is eight-armed, with flaming decoration around the crown, unusual in her case.

Two bronzes, now in the Trivandrum Museum, are most interesting unique pieces, representing Devī keeping time for Śiva as he dances. One claps her hands (Fig. 146), while the other sounds the cymbals (Fig. 147).

A whole series illustrating Śiva's dance in paintings can be noticed in different temples all over South India. One of the most effective illustrations of this theme in painting is from the Kapardīśvara temple at Tiruvalaṅḡuli in Tañjāvūr district. The whole story of Dārukāvana is illustrated here. Sixteen-armed Śiva is shown overcoming the monstrous snake,

created by the ṛishis at Dārukāvana, to destroy him (Fig. 141). Even as he overcomes the snake, Śiva dances almost in *ūrdhvajānu* nearly springing from the head of Apasmāra; Śivakāmasundarī watches the dance, Brahmā keeps time, Viṣṇu plays the drum, Kubera sounds the *pañchamukhavādya*, celestials from above, floating on the clouds, raining a storm of flowers (Fig. 142).

Another ten-armed Śiva in *ālīḍha*, merrily dancing and vigorously, has Śivakāmasundarī to his left, and Viṣṇu and Brahmā to the right watching in adoration (Fig. 144).

In this fine series of paintings, there is another illustrating the dance at Madurai, with the right leg raised, though the mode is *ānandatāṇḍava* (Fig. 143). He is ten-armed and carries attributes, like fire, axe, noose, deer; a hand points *tarjani*, one is in *rechita*, yet another in *abhaya*, while a hand poses wonder. It is an expression of wonder at his divine dance. A Gaṇa plays the drum, while ṛishis and celestials watch to the left. Śivakāmasundarī appreciates the dance of her Lord.

At Chidambaram, on the ceiling at the entrance of the shrine of Śivakāmasundarī, near the Śivagaṅgā tank, there is a pictorial narration of the entire story of Dārukāvana, how Śiva assumed the guise of Bhikshāṭana while Viṣṇu appeared as Mohinī, and how he overcame the monsters, created by the ill-omened sages, and finally started dancing. The story of saints, like Patañjali, Vyāghrapāda, Hiraṇyavarman, Nanda and all the others, is narrated in detail, at every stage concentrating on Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundarī, the dancing Lord and his consort, around whom all these stories have sprung up. Unfortunately, the most lovely representation of Naṭarāja's *sabhā*, in this pictorial series, has been to an extent damaged, but still it is an elaborate pictorial delineation of the glory of Chidambaram and Śiva's dance.

In the *maṇḍapa*, as one enters the Śivakāmasundarī shrine, there is a painting of Naṭeśa dancing in the golden hall, with his consort watching him, and Nandikeśvara, ushering from the main *maṇḍapa* a number of devotees to witness the Lord's dance.

Towards the end of the Nāyak period, the Marāṭhas came to power in Tañjāvūr. The Marāṭha school of painting, combining Nāyak-Vijayanagara traditions with some slight in-



FIG. 149. Śiva dancing sandhyātāṇḍava with celestial musicians as Devī watches from her thrones, Mysore school, 18th century A.D.



FIG. 150. *Natarāja dancing, late Kerala, 16th century A.D., from temple of Śiva, Ettumānūr.*

fluences from the Deccan, where Moghul fashions penetrated, became an interesting late school, illustrating the last phase of the history of art in South India. To this time should be assigned the usual paintings of the Tañjāvūr style from the Tañjāvūr district and the neighbouring areas. Contemporary development in Mysore (Fig. 145, 148) illustrates the same phase of art, to a certain extent influenced by the Andhra style of the late Vijayanagara period.

Of this school from the Andhra area, is Śiva dancing in *pradoshatāṇḍava* with Devī enthroned, minutely illustrating every detail of the hymn. Sarasvatī plays the lute, Lakshmi sings, Indra plays the flute, Viṣṇu sounds the drum and Brahmā sounds the cymbals. Bhṛīngi

dances in ecstasy and all other celestials, like the sun, moon, the Dikpālas and others watch the dance. From above Nārada, Tumburu and others afford the musical accompaniment to the dance of celestial nymphs, like Rambhā and Ūrvaśī. This is a fine painting of the eighteenth century, in the collection of Jagdish Mittal (Fig. 149).

Another similar painting, illustrating the same theme and almost in the same manner, is in a private collection which I noticed last year at Madras. Every little detail of the *Pradoshastava* is represented here. Nārada ecstatically plays the drum, in addition to the drum beat of Viṣṇu. Patañjali, Vyāghrapāda, Skanda and other devotees are all shown on one side. Dānavas, many of whom are great



FIG. 151. Śiva dancing, from Śiva temple, late Kerala, 18th century A.D., Vaḍakkunāṭha temple, Trichūr.

Śiva-bhaktas, are shown to the right. Skanda, Gaṇeśa, Kubera and others stand in respectful adoration of Devī, who is enthroned as the witness of Śiva's dance. The celestials from above shower flowers in a rain of *pushpavṛṣṭi*.

Medieval Kerala

It is well known that the dance of Śiva was a favourite theme in sculpture, painting and metal work in Kerala. It was so even in wood carving, in which the temples here abound. From the very beginning, wood was chosen as the material for construction, and has continued to be favoured in this part of India, where there has been a persistence in the survival of adherence to tradition. At Ettumānūr, the inside wall of the dwarfish *gopura* entrance

has a huge panel of dancing Śiva (Fig. 150), closely following the *Pradoshastava*. Devī watches the Lord's dance. The dancing figure has sixteen arms and the right foot is raised, almost in *ūrdhvajānu*. The main right hand and the left are in *āhūyavarada* and *daṇḍahasta*. In the hands to the right he carries the axe, drum, snake, noose, flame, lunar crescent and trident. To the left, there is a deer, flower, bell, lute, goad, skull-cap bowl and *nandidhvaja*. He dances on Apasmāra, disproportionately large sized for the figure dancing on him, holding a snake in his hands that is even larger than Apasmāra himself. In a characteristic way, all the late paintings from Kerala representing Śiva dancing, show a radiating *maṇḍala* of *jaṭās* flung all over and entirely spreading out in different



FIG. 152. *Natarāja*, painting from Śiva temple, late Kerala, 17th century A.D., Triprayār.

directions, touching the circular *prabhāvali*, which makes a complete medallion of the whole dance theme. In the place of the flames there are small circular decorations at intervals on the *maṇḍala* itself. Around this medallion, there are several other figures that compose the theme of *Natarāja*'s dance. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, the four baby saints, with hands raised in adoration, are given a very important place at the top of the

scene. They gaze in wonder. There are several ṛishis to the left, with hands raised over their heads in the ecstasy of devotion. To the right there are celestials, among whom is Viṣṇu playing the drum, in this case a *ghaṭa*, Brahmā keeping time with cymbals, and Indra playing the flute. Down below, Gaṇeśa mounted on his mouse, watches the dance of his father, along with his brother on the other side, seated on a peacock, with his right arm lovingly flung



FIG. 153. *Natarāja*, Painting, late Kerala, 17th century A.D., Puṇḍarikapuram.

around its neck. Close to Skanda stands Devī, witnessing the dance of her spouse with the Nandi bull beside her. Within the *maṇḍala* itself, there is another dancing figure, with three legs and four arms, resembling Bhṛīṅgi, who was lovingly provided an additional leg by Śiva and who is usually shown as an emaciated devotee. It is Bhairava as Jvarahara. As usual in all Kerala representations of the distribution

of the *jaṭā* in the *maṇḍala*, there are lotuses and other flowers strewn on them all over everywhere, with as many snakes holding up their hoods, with their coils wound around all the *jaṭās* at intervals. The crescent moon of Śiva, at the top of the *jaṭāmakūṭa*, is arranged not on the side, but above the forehead, or at the top of the *jaṭā*, the streak lying on its back, thrust between the *jaṭās*. Kālīkā is also shown



FIG. 154. Śiva dancing, late Kerala, 18th century A.D., Śiva temple, Perāmaṅgalam.

on her *pretavāhana*, very close to Śiva, to the right, beyond the *maṇḍala*. In the opinion of Coomaraswamy this is one of the earliest medieval paintings of Kerala spared for us, as it could be assigned to the beginning of the sixteenth century, on the strength of an inscription in the *gopura*, which records its renovation. This would point to the date of the painting of the panel as well. Unfortunately, there has been

a little retouching in the last few years. Nevertheless, this is an important panel. Close to it, on the adjacent wall, the tradition of the south, in showing Viṣṇu as Śeṣhaśāyī, beside dancing Śiva, as at Chidambaram, is illustrated by a huge panel representing Anantapadmanābha, Viṣṇu reclining on his Ananta serpent couch, with Brahmā issuing from his navel and attended by his Devīs.



FIG. 155. *Natarāja*, late Kerala, 18th century A.D., Padmanābhapuram palace.

It is very interesting that in the same temple, as one proceeds clockwise around the central cell, arriving at the end of the *pradakshināpatha*, one sees to the left of the entrance a fine wooden panel of about the same date as the painting earlier noted. Here again is sixteen-armed Śiva dancing, Devī watching him, with the Nandi bull close to her. This wooden panel very closely follows the painting. A little

beyond a Sūrya panel is yet another small wooden carving showing Śiva dancing, as Devī plays a musical instrument.

What is more interesting is that coinciding with the earlier phase of the temple itself, there is on the balustrade at the entrance of the *garbhagṛha*, a fine stone carving of dancing Śiva, with a single pair of arms, with different



FIG. 156. Śiva witnessing dance, late Kerala, 17th century A.D., Perāmaṅgalam.

kuṇḍalas on the two ears, the *jaṭāmakūṭa*, indicating Śiva, who is both *kapardī* and *ardhanārī*. His dance has musical accompaniment of cymbals and drum. What is more interesting in this piece is that it is a representation of Śiva as the *kuḍakūttu* dancer, or the pitcher-dancer, throwing up pots and receiving them on the shoulder, back, arms, and so forth, a dance which is a great favourite in Kerala. There are

several representations of this type of Śiva. As the originator of all forms of dance, including folk dance, Śiva is here eulogised by making him the hero of the panel. We have similar *kuḍakūttu* dance representation on another early balustrade at Tirukkoḍitthānam. Here also the dancer is meant to be Śiva, though at Trivikramaṅgalam it is not Śiva engaged in the pitcher-dance, but a beautiful feminine danseuse.

At Tiruvañjikulam, which has some excellent paintings of the sixteenth-seventeenth century preserved, there has been a fine painting of sixteen-armed Naṭarāja, which should have ranked with the beautiful panels like Umā-maheśvara, Veṇugopāla and Gopīs on the walls of the adjacent *paḷliara* and others. Unfortunately this painting, which happens to be on the wall of the small Naṭarāja shrine, within the court-yard of the temple itself, has been repainted and ruined. Incidentally it happens to be one of the very few temples in Kerala having independent metal images of Naṭarāja.

However, the loss of this beautiful painting is almost compensated by the existence of a fine wood carving, a bracket figure of Naṭarāja on the north-east corner. The metal images of Naṭarāja and Śivakāmasundarī in the temple belong to the sixteenth-seventeenth century. The interesting feature in this metal image is that there are two musicians for orchestral accompaniment on the pedestal near the terminals of the *prabhā* on either side of Śiva, one of them having four arms, while the other is normal.

In the Vaḍakkunātha temple at Trichūr, on the inside wall of the middle *prākāra* of lamps, there is a very large, probably the largest, mural representing Naṭarāja. It is an old painting, probably of the sixteenth century. It goes unnoticed, almost on account of the modern uncouth addition of a huge bull, made of painted clay, which almost hides this painting and the adjacent one, representing Padmanābha Viṣṇu as Śeṣhaśāyī. This large panel of Naṭarāja follows the usual mode of representing Śiva sixteen-armed and the details noted at Ettumānūr are repeated here. The three-headed, three-legged small dancing figure, looking like Jvarahara or Bhairava, is also repeated, as at Ettumānūr. The Śeṣhaśāyī panel on the adjacent wall is also a very large one and clearly indicates how much in the south was followed the great tradition of representing Śiva and Viṣṇu together, one a picture of dynamic force and the other of static power. On the outer wall of the main shrine the Naṭarāja theme is repeated (Fig. 151).

In the Śiva temple at Vaikom, there is a painting of sixteen-armed Śiva dancing, on the outer wall of the circular *garbhagriha*, at the starting point of the clockwise perambulation. Similarly, a beautiful early wooden panel of

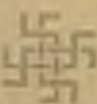
Śiva dancing, which should be assigned to the fourteenth-fifteenth century, is noticed at the top, near the first corner of the rectangular *prākāra* of lights, as one proceeds clockwise.

In the Rāma temple at Triprayār, on the other wall of the *Śrikoil*, there is a seventeenth century painting of Naṭarāja, sixteen-armed, with Devī and the Nandi bull watching his dance (Fig. 152). It is here not Viṣṇu that plays the *ghaṭa*, but Kubera, the lord of the Yakshas, dark, tusked and two-armed. As at Ettumānūr, Bhadrakālī, mounted on Vetāla, is shown to the right. At the top of the panel are, flanking one another, Gaṇeśa and Skanda.

Similarly, in the temple of Viṣṇu at Puṇḍarikapuram, there is a beautiful painting of the seventeenth century showing Naṭarāja (Fig. 153), sixteen-armed as usual, dancing on Apasmāra. The style of this painting recalls Ettumānūr and Maṭṭāñcherī work. Devī and the Nandi bull, watch the dance, as Gaṇeśa and Skanda, on their vehicles, flank the central medallion at the bottom. Kubera or Vaiśravaṇa plays the *ghaṭa* to the right below and Indra, in front of him, holds his hands clasped in adoration. A three-eyed Bhūtagaṇa, in front of Indra, blows the conch. Goat-headed Dakṣha, parrotbeaked Śuka, and a ṛishi are shown to the top left, while Nandi, Tumburu and other ṛishis are to the corresponding right. The three-faced and three-legged dancing figure of Bhairava is also present, close to the main dancer.

A bronze image of Naṭarāja and Devī, on a common pedestal, in the Trivandrum Museum, though a late piece, is interesting as an example of the ornate Kerala style (Fig. 159). Śiva has the usual four arms. While in some cases, where the *prabhā* is provided for Devī also, there are two separate *prabhāvalis*, one for Naṭarāja and the other for Śivakāmasundarī, here is Devī on the same pedestal, with the dancing Lord sharing a common *prabhā* with her.

The wooden temples of Kerala have a very interesting feature of getting the rafters protected by metal coverings. Such rafter-shoes are sometimes beautifully decorated in relief. Among the carved rafter-shoes preserved in the Trivandrum Museum there are two with the Naṭarāja theme represented on them. One of them shows Naṭarāja dancing with Kāraikkāmmaiyār close to him, keeping time (Fig. 157). The popularity of Kāraikkāmmaiyār in



Śaiva legend, and Naṭarāja's special grace for this great devotee who, once a great beauty, requested to become the very picture of ugliness, to aid her all the more to concentrate on her devotion to the Lord, is well known. The story goes that Śiva danced specially to give her a glimpse of the holy vision, and that she kept time, enraptured and enthralled by his lovely foot steps in dance. Kāraikkāmmaiyār occurs everywhere in South India, and even in Ceylon, and in far off Cambodia, as pointed out elsewhere.

Another rafter-shoe shows, not only Naṭarāja and Kāraikkāmmaiyār, but also Devī, watching his dance (Fig. 158). As these rafters are inscribed, their date has been fixed with the aid of their palaeography as the fifteenth-sixteenth century.

In the Maṭṭāncheri palace, where there is a whole gallery of beautiful panels representing scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa, there is also a great sequence of the *līlās* of Śiva. The story of his marriage with Pārvatī, the toilet of the mountain princess, and other scenes have also a great frequency here. One of them shows Devī, mounted on a bull, constantly viewing with jealous eye and catching red-handed, her lord, dancing with a bewitchingly beautiful damsel, Viṣṇu in the guise of Mohinī, which Pārvatī could not understand (p. 28, Fig. 5). Śiva, as the lord of dance, is boisterously dancing his *tāṇḍava* with the *lāśya* of Mohinī, which is possible only in the case of Viṣṇu, who is himself the progenitor of this most graceful dance in the *Kaiśikī vr̥tti*, that arose from his graceful movements of limbs, as he advanced towards Madhu and Kaiṭabha to destroy them on the milky ocean. It is Viṣṇu's *māyā*, *Vaiṣṇavī māyā*, the enchanting feminine prowess that did this deed, and here again it is the same enchantress, who not only befooled the Asuras after the churning of the ocean for ambrosia, but also Śiva himself, who madly ran after her, bewitched by her beauty. Malabar is the home of *Mohiniāṭṭam*, a feminine dance in Kerala. This *Mohiniāṭṭam* is a kind of *lāśya*, in an area where *kathakalī* as *tāṇḍava* has flourished. It is in the fitness of things that a harmony or unison of *tāṇḍava* and *lāśya* is shown by bringing together Śiva and Mohinī in a common dance play portrayed in this painting.

In another panel at Maṭṭāncheri palace itself, there is a panel of Umāmaheśvara, Śiva with Umā seated together, with their entire

retinue, including Gaṇeśa and Skanda, watching the dance of Kālī and Mohinī (p. 29, Fig. 6). The dance of Mohinī here is especially noteworthy as it clearly points to a distinct type of classical dance, *Mohiniāṭṭam*, named after the enchantress herself. Śiva, as the dancer and as the witness of great dance (Fig. 156), as also the one who propagated dance itself, by propounding it to the greatest exponents of the art, like Bharata and Nandi, is clearly thus illustrated in different paintings and sculptures representing this theme.

At Paḷḷiyarkāvu, there is a painting in the temple, a sixteen-armed Śiva, somewhat resembling the earlier ones at Ettumānūr and Puṇḍarikapuram, though much later in date. The main right hand here is not in *āhūyavarada*, but is in *chinmudrā*, indicating teaching. Interestingly enough there is an *akṣhamālā*, held between the finger and the thumb in the main right hand, while the main left is in *daṇḍahasta*.

A similar painting from the Veṭṭikāvu temple at Peramaṅgalam, though interesting for all the iconographic features usual in this area, is a late one, the result of repainting of old panels in several of the temples in Kerala, as elsewhere in the southern country (Fig. 154).

In the Padmanābhapuram palace there is a fine eighteenth century panel representing Śiva's dance (Fig. 155). Here in accordance with the style of this area the face is somewhat elongated in harmony with the general slim figure, which is the norm here. The sixteen arms, the *nandidh-vaja*, the huge Apasmāra holding an even larger snake, the gods and goddesses all around, including Devī standing beside the Nandi bull watching, Gaṇeśa and Skanda on their respective mounts, and all the rest of the retinue conform to the local tradition. Devī's taste for dance, not only as a witness, but as a participant in the exposition of the art, is made clear in a significant painting in this picture gallery itself, where a panel shows Śiva with Pārvatī, demonstrating to her his dance steps, almost as if answering her apt questions about the nuances of the art by a practical demonstration.

Eastern Gaṅga

Naṭarāja is a favourite theme in the temples of the Eastern Gaṅgas in Orissa. There are representations of Naṭarāja in the earliest temples at Bhubaneśvar, like the Śatrughneśvara, Paraśurāmeśvara, Vaitāleul and others.

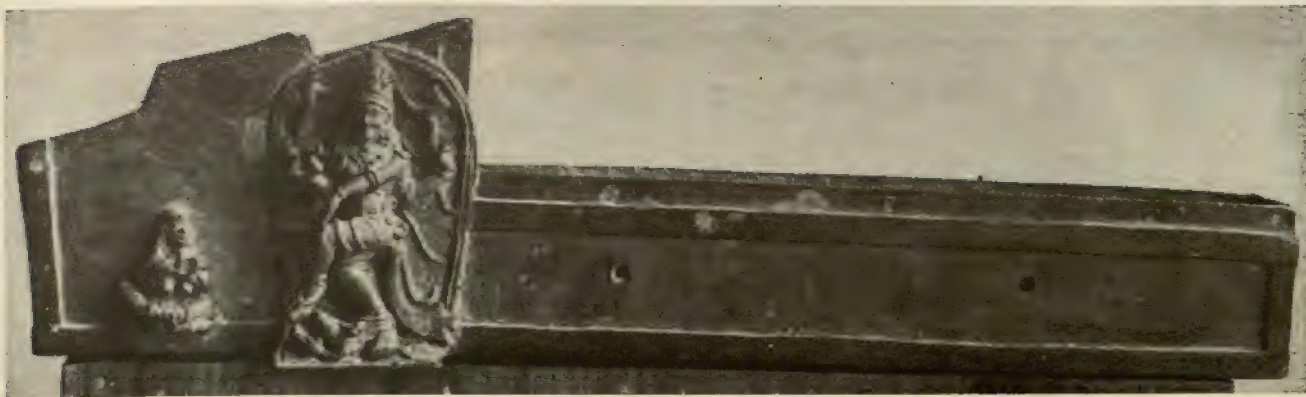


FIG. 157. *Naṭarāja with Kāraikkāmmaiyār, as motif on rafter shoe from the roof of the maṇḍapa of a temple, late Kerala, 17th century A.D.*

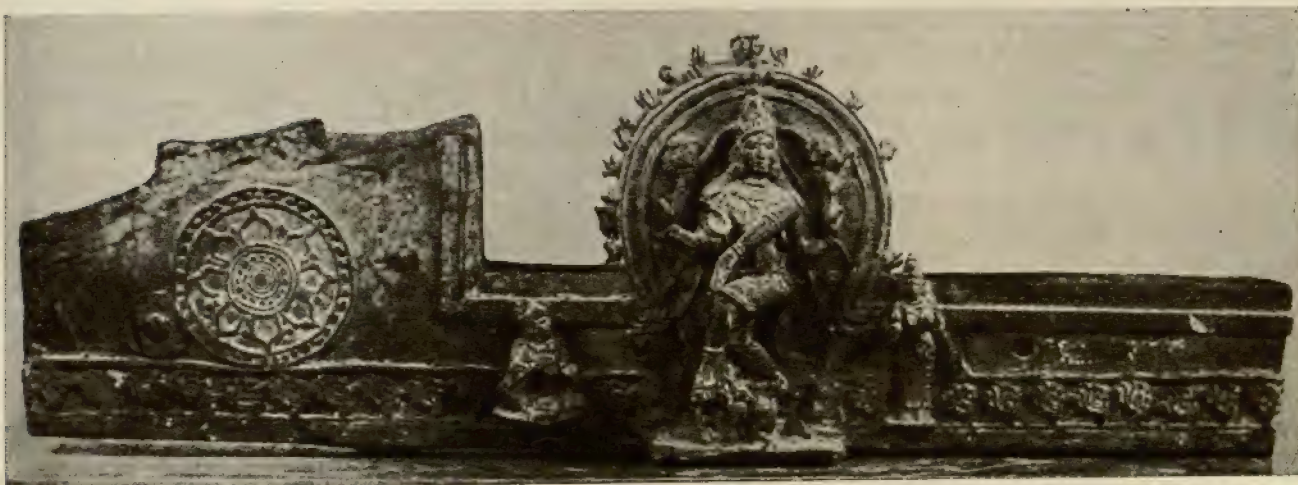


FIG. 158. *Naṭarāja with Devī as motif on rafter shoe from the roof of the maṇḍapa of a temple, late Kerala, 17th century A.D.*



FIG. 159. *Naṭarāja and Devī on same pedestal, miniature bronze, late Kerala, 17th century A.D., Trivandrum Museum.*

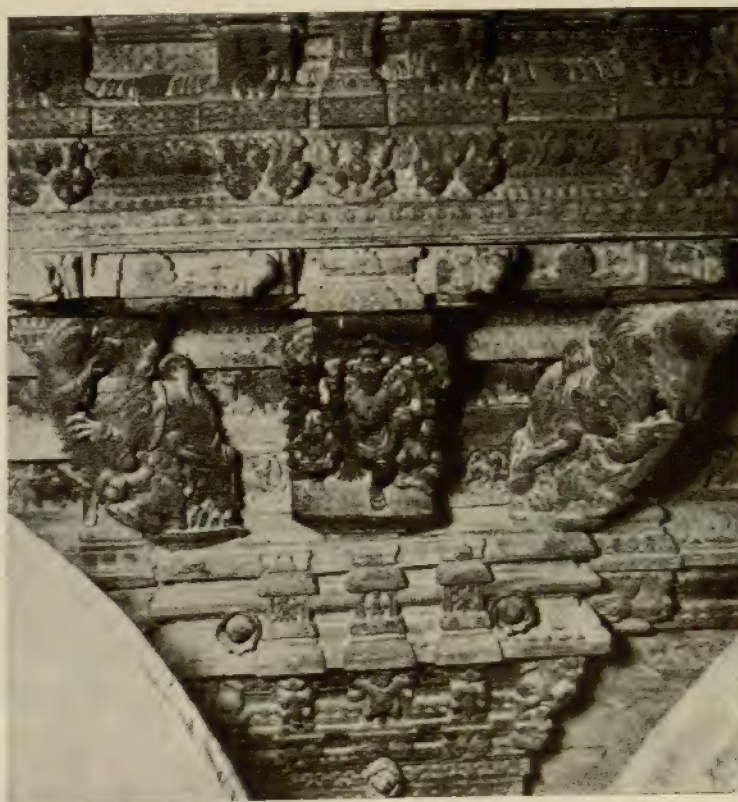


FIG. 160. *Wood panel of Naṭarāja as decoration of temple car, late Kerala, 18th century A.D., Trivandrum Museum.*



FIG. 161. *Ardhanārīśvara dancing, Eastern Gaṅga, 7th century A.D., Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhubaneśvar.*

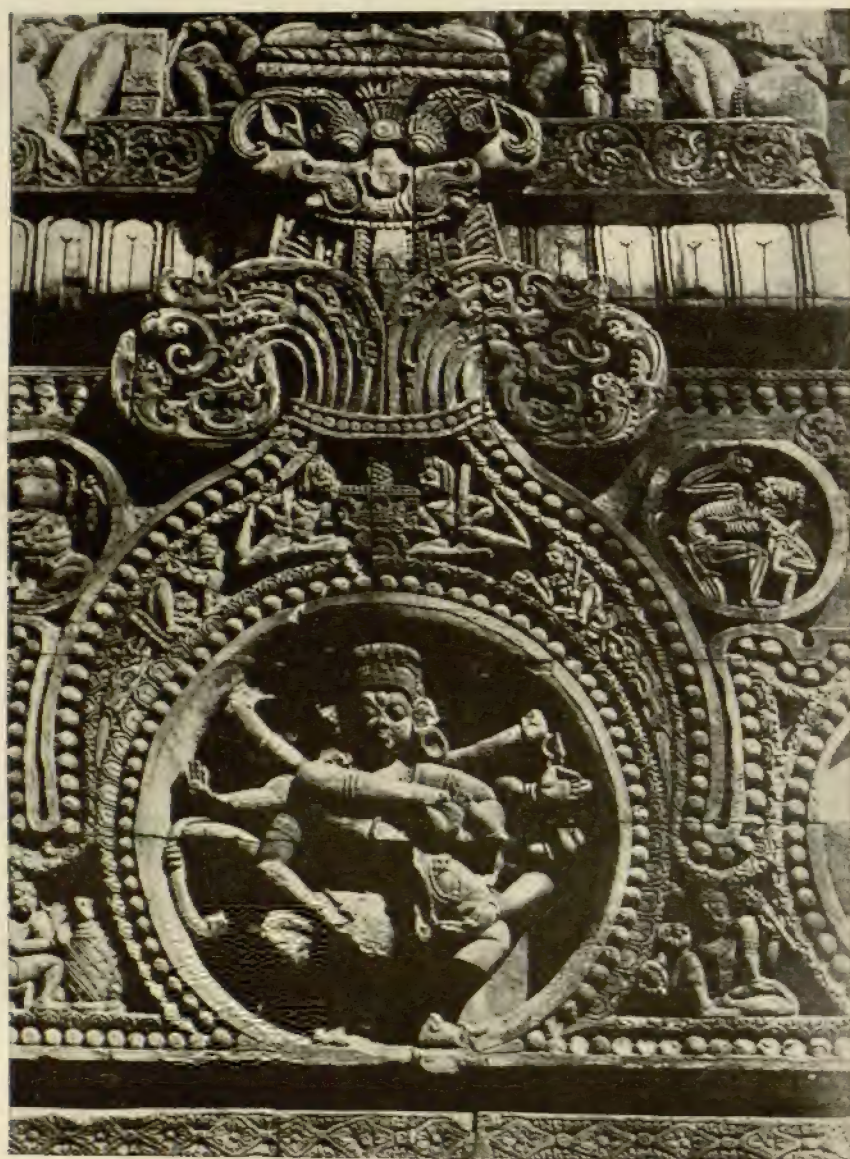


FIG. 162. *Naṭeśa on śukanāśa of façade, Eastern Gaṅga, 7th century A.D., Paraśurāmeśvara temple, Bhubaneśvar.*

The Eastern Gaṅgas had their earlier capital at Dantapura, near Mukhaliṅgam.

The Śatrughneśvara temple is one of the earliest temples here. As usual in all Śiva temples at Orissa, the *sukhanāśa* on the facade of the *deul* has a prominent panel of Naṭarāja. Here there are a number of medallions one over the other; and immediately above a vivid pictorial representation of Śiva subduing Rāvaṇa and allaying the tremour of Pārvatī as the mountain was shaken by the demon, is the panel of Naṭarāja, twelve-armed, holding the snake aloft above his head and with his fingers in various attitudes of *nrityahastas*. The more interesting sculpture here is a fine Ardhanārīśvara Naṭeśa on the left side of the temple, and, though broken, it is especially noteworthy. The bull and lion on either side are significant. The Devī half of Ardhanārīśvara carries the mirror and the Śiva half his attributes. This has to be compared with similar Ardhanārīśvara or the left side of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, an eight-armed figure.

The Paraśurāmeśvara temple at Bhubaneśvar is not only an early one, of the seventh century, but has exquisite sculptures relating to dance and music. The carving on the pierced window has beautiful panels representing vivid movements in dance, accompanied by music. Naturally, Naṭarāja has been given here great prominence. On the left side of the *maṇḍapa* is an eight-armed Ardhanārīśvara figure dancing (Fig. 161). As in the Śatrughneśvara temple, here also, the arrangement of the hair on either side of the face, is different. The ear ornaments differ on either side. Though broken, the image is prominent on the feminine side, where a mirror is also



FIG. 163. *Naṭarāja* from façade of Someśvara temple, Eastern Gaṅga, 7th-8th century A.D., Mukhalingam.



FIG. 164. *Naṭarāja* from façade of Someśvara temple, close up, Eastern Gaṅga 7th-8th century A.D., Mukhalingam.

held. Other hands carry an *akṣhamālā* and *khaṭvāṅga*, and the hand in *saṁdamśa*, suggesting Śiva as teacher, gives prominence to the *Nāṭyāchārya* aspect of Śiva. As in all sculptures of Śiva, from Bengal and Orissa, the *ūrdhvameḍhira* is very clear. The *Naṭarāja* theme is repeated in the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (Fig. 162), on the right side of the shrine above a Mahishāsura-mardini panel, on the left above a Bhikṣhāṭana medallion, and on the façade, above a medallion portraying the Rāvaṇanugraha incident.

In Mukhalingam itself, there are fine early temples, built by the Gaṅgas. The Mukhalingeśvara and the Someśvara temples (Fig. 163) are the only ones here to be dated in about the eighth-ninth centuries. One of the finest early examples of dancing Śiva, from Orissa, is in the Mukhalingeśvara temple (Fig. 165). He is twelve-armed and dances in the *chatura* pose. Of the two main hands, the one to the right is in *khaṭakāmukha*, the corresponding second left hand is also in the same disposition, while the main one is in *gajahasta*. With two hands upraised Śiva pulls taut a huge snake. Nearer to one of his eyes, a right hand and a left are in the *ardhapatāka hasta*, usually to suggest the beauty of the eyes. He holds a vessel of fire and an *akṣhamālā* in two other hands, while one of his other right hands rests on the hip. The *ūrdhva-meḍhira* is a special characteristic of sculptures from Bengal, Orissa and portions of Central India, especially noteworthy for suggesting the ascetic quality of Śiva. The Nandi, standing between the legs, lifts up his head to gaze in wonder. The emaciated attendant, probably Bhṛiṅgi, dances in tune with the movement of his master. As is usual with several sculptures of dancing Śiva from Orissa and Central India, Pārvatī, standing gazing at him in wonder, is fondled by Śiva by stroking the chin of his beloved with one of his hands to the left. The elaborate *jāṭā*, almost dressed up like a bejewelled turban with the crescent moon on top, is very characteristic of early Eastern Gaṅga sculpture. There is a large halo around the head reminding us of the similar halo in Chālukya and Rāṣṭrakūṭa sculpture.

In the Mukteśvara temple compound, there is a *Naṭarāja* in a miniature shrine, with ten arms. This representation depicts the *lalita* mode of dance. The right hand is in *gajahasta*, rather an unusual feature, while the hand normally in *abhaya* is in the *saṁdamśa* or the teaching attitude. The raised up hands hold

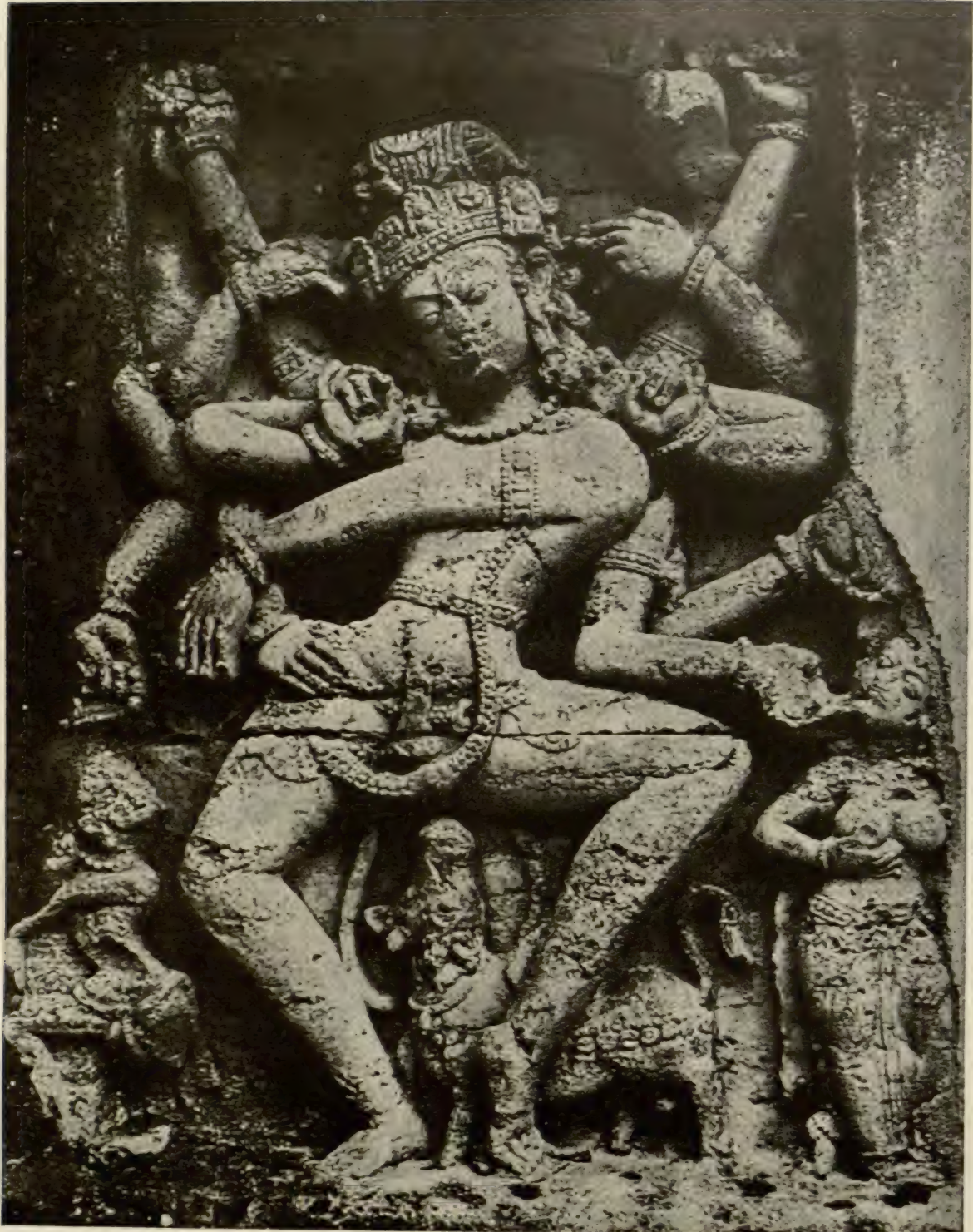


FIG. 165. *Natarāja* from niche, Eastern Ganga, 8th century A.D., Mukhalingesvara temple, Mukhalingam.

the snake, while the others carry the *sūla*, the rosary and a *pāśa* to the right and the *viṇā* and fire to the left, the remaining ones resting almost on the thigh. Here, as in the case of the Chālukya example of Śiva from Bādāmī, similarly carrying the *viṇā*, there is the emphasis on the essential unity of the art of music and dance, as without music, there can be no dance; and Śiva is also the teacher of dance, as indicated by the hand in *saṁdamśa*, the same as *vyākhyāna-mudrā*. While Gaṇeśa keeps company by dancing to the right, the Gaṇa sounds the *ūrdhvaka* drum to the left.

Saṅgitāya prahatamurajāḥ is the appropriate phrase to begin dance, as the tap of the drum starts the music of the orchestra, which in turn calls for the commencement of dance. Another early sculpture of Natarāja from the Paraśurāmeśvara temple is Śiva dancing in the form of Ardhanārīśvara. To the left, which is the female part of the hermaphrodite form, there is a mirror in one of his hands, to suggest the aesthetic quality of Pārvatī. Here also on the male side, *khaṭvāṅga* and *akṣhamālā* symbolise Śiva, as also the main hand in *saṁdamśa* or *vyākhyāna*, indicative of his pre-

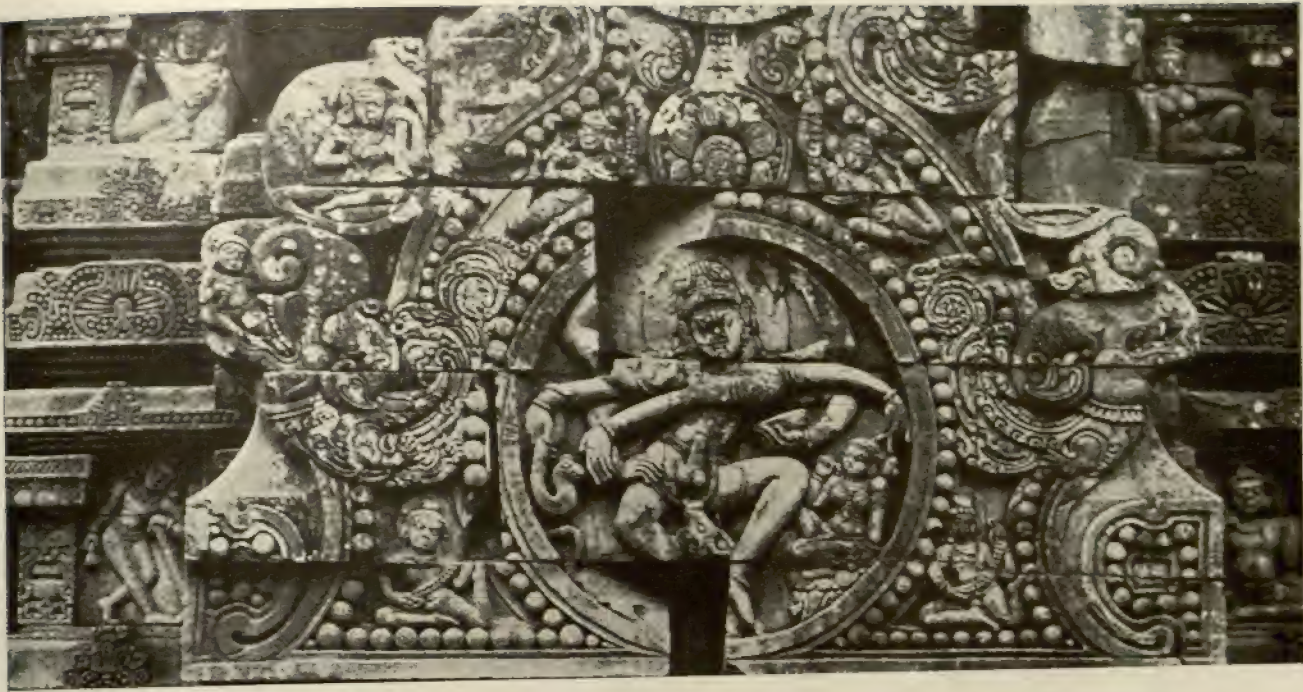


FIG. 166. Śiva dancing, Eastern Gaṅga, 8th century A.D., Śiśireśvara temple, Bhubaneśvar.



FIG. 167. Śiva dancing on bull, Eastern Gaṅga, 11th century A.D., Pāpanāśini mūrti, Bhubaneśvar.



FIG. 168. Naṭarāja, Eastern Gaṅga, 10th century A.D., Khiching Museum, Mayūrbhaṅj.

ceptorship. On the left side the *dolahasta* and mirror are indicative of the easy gait and feminine charm of Pārvatī.

The theme of Naṭarāja has appealed so much to the architect of the Mukteśvara temple that he has not only given it on the façade of the shrine but has represented it on all the sides. One of these is a charming Ardhanārīśvara dancing.

In the Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple at Bhubaneśvar, there is a ten-armed figure of dancing Śiva, Nandi standing behind him, in between his legs. The *karihasta* and *āhūyavarada*, or *khaṭakāmukha*, indicated by two hands, and the *dolahasta*, by another, the snake in one hand and the *kapāla* in yet another, are all interesting attributes. His fondling of Pārvatī, standing close to him to the left, is a normal feature noticed in this area.



FIG. 169. *Natarāja* from niche, Eastern Gaṅga, 7th century A.D., Bharateśvara temple, Bhubaneśvar.

From the Vaitāldeul again, there is an almost similar representation. Practically all the details are repeated, including the fondling of Devī.

In the Someśvara temple (Fig. 164), there is yet another repetition of this type, with slight variation in the disposition of the limbs, the attributes, however, being almost the same. Pārvatī watches with interest the dance of her Lord, though Śiva does not particularly fondle her here in the panel from Śiśireśvara (Fig. 166).

In the Mukteśvara temple, there is a Śiva dancing in the *lalita* pose. The features are more refined, and suggest all the grace that we find in the magnificent miniature masterpiece of architecture from Orissa. This figure has eight arms. The right hand, thrown across the chest, in *gajahasta*, and the left, in *abhaya*, are exactly as in the other famous sculptures from the south, representing Natarāja, though



FIG. 170. *Mārtaṇḍabhairava* dancing on boat, Eastern Gaṅga, 13th century A.D., Koṇārak.

the other features, like the multiplicity of arms and carrying of attributes, usually associated with dancing Śiva in this area, like rosary, *triśūla*, the snake held by two arms over the head and so on, instead of the drum and the fire, is all very interesting. Even the *jaṭā* here is arranged in a manner suggesting more advanced technique. Nandi, behind him and between his legs, with upraised head, is almost rubbing his thigh. The *ūrdhva-medhra* here, as in the Vaitāldeul temple, is particularly noteworthy.

In the beautiful Rājarāṇī temple there is a worn image of Śiva with six arms, dancing in *chatura*. He carries a snake in the arms over his head, carries the *khaṭvaṅga*, one of his hands is in *gajahasta*, while the corresponding arm to the right is in *āhūyavarada*, though quite worn. Behind him is the bull. There are musicians on either side, one playing the drum and another, probably, the cymbals.



FIG. 171. *Natarāja dancing on bull, Pāla, Śaṅkarabandha, Dacca, 10th century A.D.*

Khiching in Mayurbhañj has given us some exquisite carvings of Śiva, of which those portraying the Natarāja theme are specially noteworthy. There are two sculptures, both unfortunately broken, showing Śiva as the dancer. One is in the museum at Khiching (Fig. 168) and the other fixed in the temple itself which has been renovated. Every detail in sculpture from Khiching has a distinctiveness about its decorative element. The *jaṭā* is arranged in a different

fashion, the ear ornaments, the anklets, the *yajñopavīta*, the armlets, the *kaṭisūtra*, in fact, every jewel and even the features are distinctive. The Nandi is shown behind Śiva, looking up in ecstasy. But Śiva here dances beside the bull and not on the bull. Though this is the norm in Orissa, occasionally, the fashion in Bengal is preferred and at Bhubanesvar, in the Pāpanāśinī Maṭh, there is a medallion showing Śiva dancing on the bull.

The influence of Bengal in Orissa is very often noticed. This is as it may be expected, as Orissan traditions are similarly revealed in the Eastern Chāḷukya monuments, because of the proximity of the kingdoms. In the Pāpanāśinī temple, there is a carving of Śiva dancing on the bull. He is six-armed, holds the snake over his head in two of his upraised arms, and carries the *śūla* and drum, while the main hands are in *abhaya* and *gajahasta*. His legs are crossed in *svastika* on the back of the bull. The animal with his upraised head in great hilarious spirit is enjoying the dance of his master. There are two Devas, dancing on either side of Śiva, one with the *śruk*, or the sacrificial ladle in his hand, and the other with a fan. These are obviously intended to represent Agni and Vāyu, two of the Lokapālas. On either side above, are fluttering *Vidyādhara*s, holding garlands to honour the dancing deity (Fig. 167).

The tradition of Śiva carrying the *vīṇā* as he dances, to suggest his musical excellence combined with his unrivalled skill in dance, has very early examples in Orissa. Of early date like the Śatrughneśvara, is the Bharateśvara temple, where Śiva, ten-armed, is shown dancing in *chatura*, carrying his usual attributes like the snake held aloft, the trident, skull-cap, rosary, two of his hands holding the *vīṇā* against his chest in an attitude to play on it

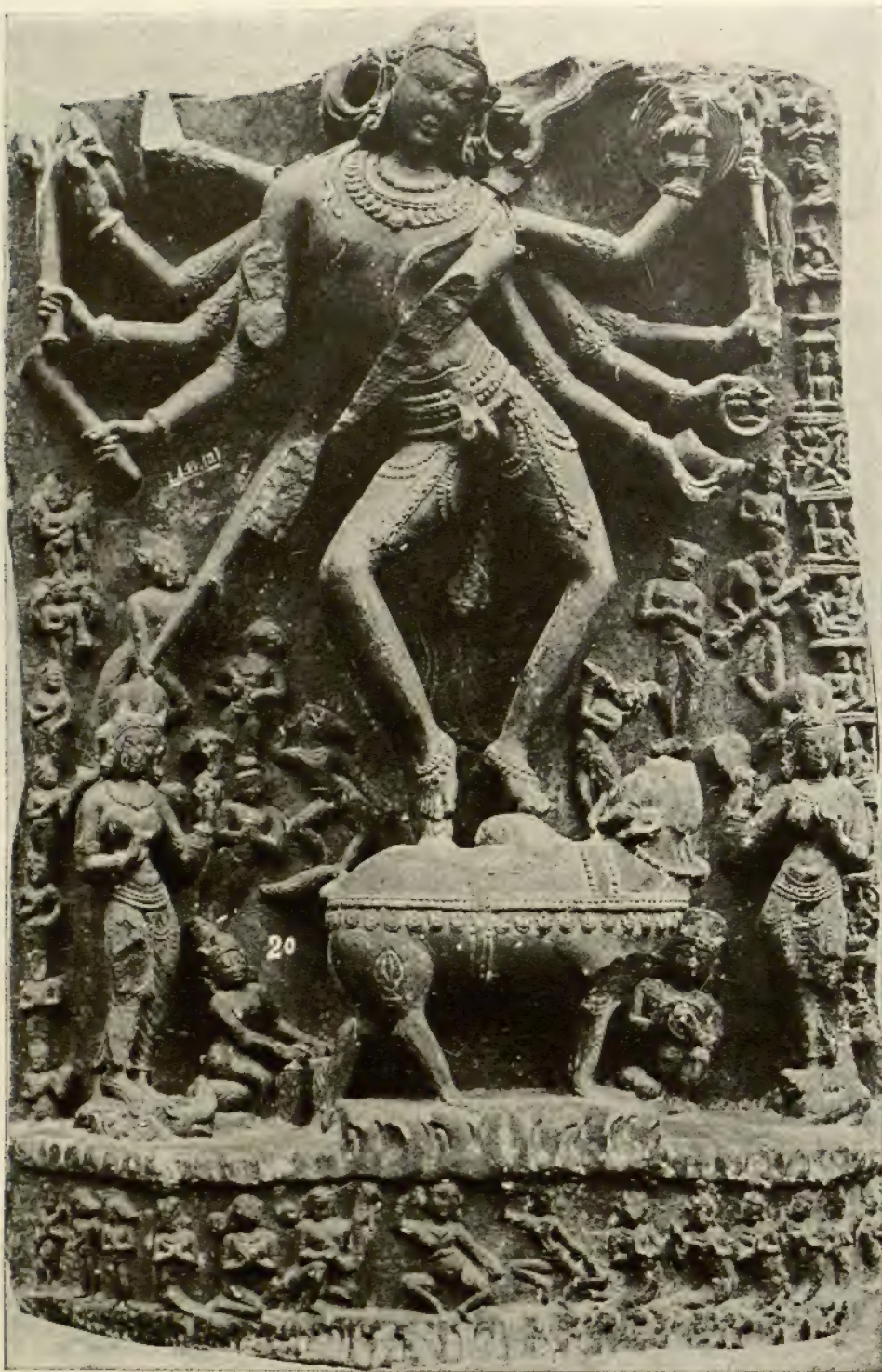


FIG. 172. *Natarāja on bull, Pāla, 10th century A.D., Ballālabāḍī, Dacca Museum.*

(Fig. 169). At his feet, to the right, is baby Skanda on his peacock, while Nandi is to the left, behind his legs.

A peculiar form of Śiva and Sūrya combined is Mārtāṇḍabhairava, dancing in *lālita* pose on a boat, occurring on the Sun temple at Koṇārak. He is three-headed and six-armed, carries the drum, trident and *kapāla*, a long ghastly garland of skulls and, with gaping mouths, looks the very picture of wonder (Fig. 170).

Pāla and Sena

The Natarāja images found in Bengal have

the distinct tradition of Śiva dancing on the bull. The bull itself is depicted in an ecstatic state. Śiva is ten or twelve-armed, and has sometimes the *viṇā* also in his hand, which he plays as he dances. In some of the images a pair of hands is shown above his head clapping and keeping time by means of *karatāla*. He is usually flanked by Gaṅgā and Gaurī, though it is also occasionally Gaṅgā and Yamunā. This form of image is known as *Narteśvara*, as it is called in an inscription on the pedestal of a badly mutilated image from Bharella in Tippera district. This image, which must have been very beautiful and immense when it was



FIG. 173. *Naṭarāja on bull with vīṇā, Pāla, 10th century A.D., Naṭghar, Tippera Distt.*

reclaimed from a tank, was subsequently broken, and has been illustrated by Dr. Bhattasali in his Catalogue of Images in the Dacca Museum. The inscription, a long one, on the pedestal, has recorded the consecration of the image by Bhavadeva, son of Kusumadeva, in the eighteenth regnal year of Layahachandra. Dr. Bhattasali considers Kusumadeva to be a vassal prince who ruled a kingdom in the territory around modern Comilla. From the

alphabet of the inscription this has been referred to the tenth century. In it the vehicles of the river goddesses flanking the broken Nandi show that they should have been Gaṅgā and Yamunā and not Gaṅgā and Gaurī as in the other sculptures. Judging from the workmanship, this image, unfortunately broken, should have been not only the largest so far found, but an exceedingly elegant one also.

The most beautiful among the Naṭarāja images found in Bengal is undoubtedly the one from Śaṅkarbandhā, Dacca district, presented to the Dacca Museum by J. N. Majumdar (Fig. 171). This has been given a very prominent place among the illustrations in his Catalogue of Sculptures in the Dacca Museum by Dr. Bhattasali. Gaṅgā and Gaurī flank Naṭarāja who dances ecstatically on the bull. The animal, with two of his legs raised up and with his face turned and twisted to look up and enjoy the dance, is himself in an ecstatic state, as may be seen by the curves and contours of the body and the curled up tail. The joy of the netherworld and the reverence of the Nāgas is shown below Nandi in a row of hooded figures, as the denizens of Pātāla, carved on the pedestal. The ten-armed Śiva on this plaque carries the attributes described in the *Matsya-purāṇa*, like the sword, lance, staff, trident, *varada*, shield, skull-cap, snake, rosary and *khaṭvāṅga*. Above the main figure, the Lokapālas are shown on their respective vehicles; the top portion, further up, is broken, but from the presence of Sūrya as the first in a series of deities, it appears to be the nine planets. There are also fluttering Vidyādhara with garlands. On the sides, above Gaṅgā and Umā, there are musical Gaṇas and Gaṇeśa, as well as Bhṛīṅgi. The tinkling anklets on the feet of Śiva are especially noteworthy. The *Nāga* ornament, the sacred thread *nāgayajñopavīta*, is shown in therianthropomorphic form of a human bust of Nāgarāja, with snake hoods over his head, seen on the left shoulder of Śiva, where rests the knot of the *yajñopavīta*. Undoubtedly, the most noteworthy features in this piece are the graceful movements of Śiva and the ecstatic state of the bull. It is interesting to see that even the Nāga figure, with his hands moving rhythmically, is in the act of keeping



FIG. 174. Naṭarāja dancing on bull with vīṇā, Pāla, 10th century A.D., Rāṇṭhāṇī, Dacca Distt, Dacca Museum.

time. The sculpture almost suggests the spheres covered by the *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva, Pātāla, Bhūmi and Ākāśa or Svarga, the celestial spheres at the top, the terrestrial spheres in the centre and the netherworld at the bottom. Gaṅgā and Umā, both Haimavatīs, daughters of Himavant, naturally symbolise the earth. The right hand in *daṇḍahasta* and the corresponding left wonderfully suggest the rhythmic movements of the Lord of dance.

Another Naṭarāja in the Dacca Museum (Fig. 172), which was found in a tank close to the south of the southernmost of Ballālabāḍī at Rāmpāl in Dacca district, is important as from the site of the palace of the Sena king of Bengal, as the name of the find spot suggests. It was probably enshrined in a temple within the palace. We may recall that the Naihati plate of Ballālasena opens with an invocation of Śiva's *sandhyā tāṇḍava*. The Senas were famous for their devotion to Śiva, and as from their personal chapel, this should have been treasured by them greatly. It is a fine image, with clear rhythmic movement, though unfortunately mutilated. The figure itself is represented lightly dancing on the toes over the hump of the bull which looks up with great ecstasy, the body stiffened with joy and the tail curled up. Śiva is ten-armed and has the usual attributes, like the sword, the thunderbolt, trident and staff, the shield, *khaṭvāṅga*, snake and skull, the principal hands being in *gajahasta* and in what appears to have been *abhaya*. Gaṅgā and Gaurī are the principal figures flanking him and two seated musicians play the drum and the cymbals. The drum is the *ūrdhva* type. Bhṛīṅgi is dancing ecstatically. Of the other Gaṇas, one plays the conch, Tumburu himself strums the *vīṇā*, Nandikeśvara claps his hands to keep time, while others have their hands clasped in adoration. There are a number of other deities all around, watching the *tāṇḍava* dance. On the pedestal itself below, there are other dance figures, shown along with Nāgas, with their hands joined in adoration, watching Śiva's dance. This was presented by Rai Ramesh Chandra Guha Bahadur to the Dacca Museum.

The other images noticed by Dr. Bhattasali and illustrated in his catalogue, are Naṭarāja from Naṭghar in the Brāhmanbāria subdivision of Tippera district where it is still under worship (Fig. 173). It shows Śiva dancing on the bull, with the *vīṇā* held in two of his hands. He holds Śeshanāga arched over his head in two hands, and the remaining hands carry the



FIG. 175. Vishnu dancing on chakra, Sena, 12th century A.D., Asutosh Museum, Calcutta.

FIG. 176. Reverse of the above.

rosary, trident and the drum, the noose, the *khatvāṅga* and probably a skull. It is not very distinct. Gaṅgā and Umā flank the principal deity, both carrying each a vase in her hand. There are dance as well as musical figures on the pedestal below.

The other one which was found at the Deul of Rāṇihāṭi in Dacca district has been acquired by Mr. Haque, Director of the Dacca Museum (Fig. 174). The figure here has twelve arms. Śeshanāga is held up as a semi-circular canopy above; the bust of the Nāgarāja, with his hands clasped in adoration, is seen to the right in continuation of the reptile body. Another pair of arms, above the *jaṭā*, claps to keep time. The rest

FIG. 177. Vishnu or Śiva dancing on chakra, Pāla, 10th century A.D., Patna Museum.

FIG. 178. Reverse of the above.







FIG. 181. *Natarāja*, bronze, Pāla, 10th century A.D., Melakkaḍambūr, Tañjāvūr Distt.

FIG. 179. *Natarāja*, bronze, Pāla, 10th century A.D., Melakkaḍambūr, Tañjāvūr Distt.

FIG. 180. *Natarāja* dancing on bull, Sena, 12th century A.D., Asutosh Museum, Calcutta.

of the arms carry the rosary, drum, *triśūla* and *kuṇḍika*, while the last pair suggests *abhaya* and *varada*. Gaṅgā to the right carries a water vessel in one hand and lotuses in the other. Umā, standing on the lion has the mirror in her right hand and the flowers in the left. The bull, with his head raised up, and the legs also in consonance with the dance of his master, is in great ecstasy, as may be seen from the curled up tail and the enthusiastic look of the animal. Bhṛīṅgi and Vaṭuka Bhairava dance on

either side of the pedestal. There are other musical figures also. On top, there are flying Vidyādharas carrying garlands and five deities, Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu and Kārtikeya.

Yet another image of this type, acquired for the Dacca Museum, is almost identical in description, except that at the top the central figure of Śiva, over *Natarāja* is replaced by a Nandi, and down below there is a celestial nymph, Rambhā or Ūrvaśī dancing, with musical figures, Gaṇas playing the drum and the cymbals. Vaṭuka Bhairava is also shown dancing. Gaṅgā has three serpentine hoods

over her head. Though she does not carry in this case a water vessel, her vehicle, the *makara*, is very clear under her feet, as in the case of Umā, who stands on her lion with the mirror in her right hand and flowers in the left.

Another fragment of sculpture from Bengal, the exact find spot of which is not clear, is Śiva dancing on a seated bull, not a standing one, from the Asutosh Museum of Art of Calcutta University. Śiva is ten-armed and carries the *vīṇā* in his hand. He has the usual attributes, including *akṣamālā*, *kapāla*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *nāgaṇāṣa*, etc. As some portions are broken, it is not very clear what the other attributes are. A Gaṇa with pot-belly, Kumbhodara, dances to the right of Śiva and Bhṛīṅgi in an emaciated form to the left. Though for aesthetic charm this sculpture cannot compare with the Naṭarāja images from Dacca, it is still important for depicting Nandi seated, rather than standing in great ecstasy (Fig. 180).

Another sculpture representing the dance of Viṣṇu, very similar to that of Śiva, specially with the topmost pair of arms in an attitude of clapping to keep time, is from the Asutosh Museum of Art. This is from a circular medallion, which is a representation of the *chakra* of Viṣṇu. Sometimes *chakrapurusha* himself is shown dancing in this attitude and it is particularly interesting as the form is after the dancing Śiva of this type, occurring in Pāla and Sena sculptures. This form is repeated on both sides (Fig. 175, 176). This form of dancing *chakrapurusha* on wheel is presupposed in an earlier Pāla carving from the Patna Museum (Fig. 177, 178).

In all these cases, Śiva has the *ūrdhva meḍhra* or the *ūrdhvaliṅga* which is very characteristic of all Pāla representations of Śiva. It is to show his yogic nature, his self-restraint. He is dressed, but still *digambara*. It is noteworthy that in all these cases, the dance pose chosen is *chatura* rather than *lalita*.

Dr. Bhattasali has specially drawn attention to the fact that several dancing figures of Śiva have been found in south-east Bengal, specially in the Dacca and Tippera districts, where the tradition of a special form, called Nartēśvara, has been very strong, as seen in the name of a village itself, as the home of the dancing Lord, Naṭghar, where still an image of Nartēśvara is under worship.

The least known, but, nevertheless, probably the best representation of Śiva dancing fashioned in Bengal, is a war trophy brought home by the great conqueror, Rājendra Choḷa Gaṅgaikonda, who had a keen eye for the beautiful (Fig. 179, 181). This was brought and established by him in the temple of Amṛita-ghaṭeśvara at Melakkaḍambūr in Tañjāvūr district. It is interesting that this spot is not very far off from Chidambaram, the great seat of the Lord of dance in the south. This image is now under worship.

Probably, Rājendra did not want to disturb the importance and sanctity of the image at Chidambaram which his ancestors had served with such devotion. At the same time, he wanted that a new type of dance form, favoured in the north, and equally fervently worshipped in Bengal, should be introduced for comparative understanding in his realm, in as close vicinity to the temple of Naṭarāja at Chidambaram as possible.

Incidentally it is to be noted that this is the only image in metal so far found in Bengal, representing dancing Śiva, known as Nartēśvara. Aesthetically, also, it is a great masterpiece, and is far superior to any image of this deity in stone found in Bengal. In this image, Śiva is sixteen-armed, dancing in *lalita* on the back of the bull, which ecstatically looks up, with his head raised to watch his master at dance. The *ūrdhvaliṅga* of Śiva is clearly shown. The *jaṭāmakuṭa* is arranged in the fashion normal in medieval Bengal. There is a snake on his shoulder with its hood raised up. The terminals of the *jaṭās* trail on his shoulders. The main right hand is in *gajahasta* while the corresponding left is in *abhaya* or *patāka* raised up. The other hands carry the bow and arrow, trident, sword, shield, *khaṭvāṅga*, skull cap and noose. There are several attendant figures, both on the pedestal itself and against it on its front side. Some of them look like Bhairavas dancing in weird form and others Gaṇas. Gaṇapati, the Lord of the Gaṇas, is also in their company, admiring his father's dance. One of these is Skanda. A deity seated on a swan, to the right against the *prabhā*, appears to be Sarasvatī symbolising the musical orchestra. There are two Vidyādhara on the top, against the *prabhā*, with garlands in their hands. This is a magnificent sculpture in metal and the beaming face of the deity reveals to us how great is the master Śilpin who fashioned it.



FIG. 182. *Naṭarāja dancing on bull, Kāmarūpa, 10th century A.D., Assam State Museum, Gauhati.*

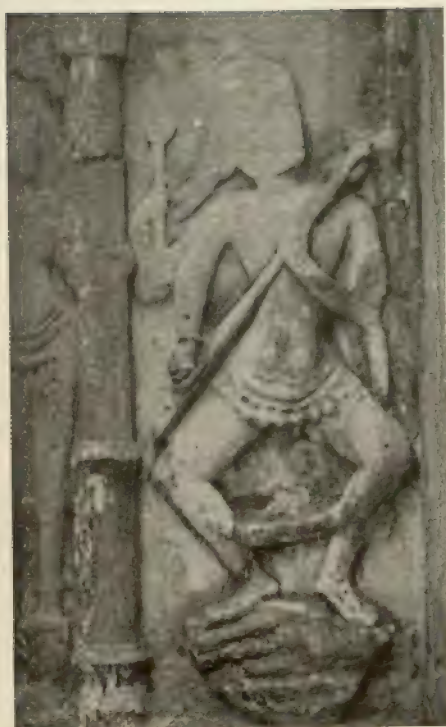


FIG. 183. *Naṭarāja, four-armed, Kāmarūpa, 10th century A.D., from Kāmākhyā temple, Gauhati.*

FIG. 184. *Naṭarāja from the niche of temple façade, Karkoṭa, 8th century A.D., Payār, Kashmir.*

FIG. 185. *Naṭarāja, close up view of the above.*



It is interesting to find the tradition in Bengal of Śiva dancing on the bull repeated in neighbouring areas like Assam, Orissa and Nepal. In the Pāpanāśinī Maṭh at Bhubaneśvar, as already described, there is a medallion showing a lotus in bloom with the petals all spread around, carved beautifully, with a border of beads suggesting a large seed vessel, as a circle, within which Śiva is shown dancing on a bull, flanked by Agni and Vāyu, as companions in dance. Though a rare carving for Orissa, it suggests the spread of a tradition beyond the territory of its origin and preference.

Kāmarūpa

All the more interesting is this type of figure of Śiva dancing on the bull as it is represented

in a larger area in eastern India. A typical carving of Naṭarāja from Assam is a medieval one in a circular medallion, recovered from the bank of the river Brahmaputra in the vicinity of Gauhati and preserved in the Assam State Museum (Fig. 182). According to the tradition of the *Matsyapurāṇa*, which is followed in Eastern India, this dancing Śiva is ten-armed. He dances on Nandī as in other Pāla sculptures. He is in the *ardhaparyāṅka* attitude, with the right leg raised and bent. The main arms are mutilated, but the rest carry various attributes, like *triśūla*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *dhanus*, *khaḍga*, *kheṭa*, *nāga* and *pāśa*. Apart from long garlands, almost like a sacred thread, there is an unusually long and wide fluttering upper garment, *uttariya*. The bull is quite alert and has his face turned upward, witnessing with appreciation the dance of his master—*devavikṣaṇatātparaḥ*. This image of the eleventh century is typical of this icon in Assam where the number of examples found to represent this form has been quite small.

On the wall of the Kāmākhyā temple, there is a carving of Śiva dancing, to which my attention has been drawn very kindly by Mr. Arun Bhattacharjee. This is a four-armed figure with the face nearly lost, but still very interesting (Fig. 183) as it combines the concepts of Viṇādhara and Naṭarāja in one. He is playing the *viṇā* as he dances, and to keep time, there are jingling bells on the waist-zone, which shows the musical accompaniment to the dance managed by the dancer himself. He also wears a large garland running almost the whole length of his form. What is very unusual in this piece is that he dances, not on a bull but on a dwarf, almost like the Apasmāra in South Indian sculpture. The *jaṭās*, flowing towards the right and only on that side, almost suggest his Ardhanārīśvara form. While one pair of arms carries the *viṇā*, the other two hands, which are free, carry attributes that are not very clear; probably it is the *khaṭvāṅga* in the right hand. As there is a great paucity of sculptures representing this form in this part of the country, it is fortunate there are at least two to show the predilection of the sculptor towards the dance aspect of Śiva.

Karkoṭa and Utpala

Kāshmir has been one of the greatest seats of Śiva worship. In fact, *Pratyabhijñādarśana* is a special approach to Śaiva philosophy contributed by Kāshmir. It was supposed to have been revealed by Śiva himself in the form of *sūtras* which Somananda expounded in his

Śivadṛṣṭi, the same as *Śivadarśana*. Utpala's *Pratyabhijñā sūtras* or *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā*, as it is known, was the contribution of this famous pupil of Somananda. Somananda and Utpala who lived in the ninth century were followed by the great Abhinavagupta who wrote several works to expound Kāshmirī Śaivism. He wrote such books as *Śivadṛṣṭyālochana Pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī* (*Laghvī Vṛitti*), *Pratyabhijñāvivṛitī-vimarśinī* (*Bṛihatī Vṛitti*), *Paramārthasāra* and so forth. Utpala's *Śivastotrāvalī* is not only popular, but provokes great devotional emotion.

Abhinavagupta is also famous for the magnificent commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Such a masterly treatise presupposes a great tradition of dance in Kāshmir, sustaining this great pan-Indian art of rhythm in consonance with the rhyme, rhythm and melody of music. Śiva, as the great exponent of dance, extolled in such glowing terms as the supreme dancer in several of his own verses in his commentary by Abhinavagupta, cannot go without a representation in the medieval sculpture of Kāshmir.

Most of the monuments of Kāshmir have been irretrievably lost, and the few that exist have very little sculpture left, as all the carvings have either been mutilated and lost or destroyed, along with the imposing architectural structures, which are all in desolate irremediable ruins. At Mārtāṇḍ, in the temple of the Sun, a flower of the time of the Karkoṭa dynasty, of which Muktāpīḍa Lalitāditya is a name to conjure with, there is not a single sculpture. In the Avantīśvara temple, the finest monument of the Utpala dynasty, one can count half a dozen carvings that still exist *in situ*, including fortunately the royal portrait of Avantivarman with his queen, reverently worshipping the deity that he established in what should have been a singularly noble shrine for Viṣṇu, Avantisvāmi, so named after the king. In the Avantīśvara temple, it is still worse, as here all the sculptural wealth is lost, except for a solitary damaged carving, though an exquisite one, of Avantivarman and his queen, royal portrait delineating dedicated worship at the shrine of Śiva, named after the king Avantīśvara.

In such circumstances, even a single sculpture recovered from Kāshmir to represent the dance form of Śiva would indeed be a great good fortune; and we have it at Payār at some distance from Śrīnagar. Fortunately, the very



FIG. 186. *Naṭarāja*, 9th century A.D., Lakhamanḍal, Himāchal Pradesh.

distance and lonely location of the small temple has assured its safety. The structure itself, though small, with the double pyramidal roof, with gable over trefoil and arch, facing the four directions in the typical Kāshmīri style, indicates the temple as a ninth century shrine dedicated to Śiva. It can be assigned to the time of the Utpala dynasty. The simple, but elegant motifs of swans and Nandi bulls, addorsed on pilaster capitals, add to the charm. There are four panels facing the four directions above the arches and below the gable illustrating four forms of Śiva.

The panel to the east, the direction which the temple faces, is of Lakulīśa, with the staff in his hand, seated cross-legged on a cane seat with his four disciples. To the south is a panel representing Bhairava in vigorous action, the elephant to his right and Devī to the left, the latter looking almost frightened. The panel to the north is three-headed Śiva, with the central face peaceful and serene and the other two representing the terrific *aghora* and the benign feminine face of Umā. He is also seated cross-legged on a cane seat. But the most interesting of all these is the last and the most vigorous in action, the dancing form of Śiva (Fig. 184, 185). Śiva is here represented in *ūrdhvajānu* pose, with his right leg bent and knee raised up. He is six-armed. His main arms rest, one against the thigh and the other against the chest. Another pair carries the *sūla* and *khaṭvāṅga*. The third and last pair adjust the swirling *jaṭās*, or hold a garland against the *jaṭās*. There is also the

great possibility of this being intended to show the pulling up of a screen, symbolising the veil of *māyā* in order to liberate the devout that realise his grace as the means of salvation. The *ūrdhvajānu karaṇa* requires the raising up of the bent leg almost to reach up to the chest and the position of the hands is optional. Abhinavagupta, however, suggests that one of the hands may be in *alapallava* above the raised knee, while another hand may be bent and in *khaṭakāmukha* against the chest. In this carving the left hand is as the text would have it, *vakshasthakakāmukhaḥ*. The other main hand, however, rests on the thigh. As the hands are optional, we cannot expect a complete tally of position preferred by the commentator Abhinavagupta, a couple of centuries after the carving was created. To the left of dancing Śiva is seated a celestial damsel playing the *vīṇā*. The *vīṇā* is of the harp type and gives a clue to the date of the image, as this type of musical instrument went out of use in India after the ninth-tenth century. To the right is seated a drummer, playing the *ūrdhva* drum and a little baffled by the vigorous movements of the limbs of the great dancer, Mahānāṭa. The drummer is shown with his torso and head swaying to right to make room for the lifted leg of Śiva. Though the figures are a little worn, the vigorous and enthusiastic dance movements of Śiva, the wonder-struck expression of the drummer, and the intent gaze of the player on the lute, are all treated in a masterly fashion. Though it is probably the only sculpture to illustrate the dance tradition in Kāshmīr, whence wrote Abhinavagupta, the one great commentary that we know of on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it is fortunate that it is nevertheless a masterly creation.

Fortunately, this is not the only sculpture of the time and from the area. There is another from the Śiva temple at Lakhamanḍal which illustrates Śiva's dance (Fig. 186) in almost the same manner as at Payār. This sculpture should also be assigned to the time of the Utpala dynasty of Kāshmīr though from a southern point of the kingdom. Though Śiva dances here not in *ūrdhvajānu* but in *lalita*, and has ten arms, instead of six, as at Payār, the topmost pair adjusts the swirling *jaṭās* or holds a garland on the *jaṭās*, exactly as in the sculpture from Payār. The figure of the *vīṇā* player to the left in the Payār sculpture is here transposed to the right, and from the fact that Śiva is fondling her by stroking her chin, it is clear that it is Pārvatī and not any other nymph. The *vīṇā*



FIG. 187. *Ardhanārīśvara*, *Gurjara Pratihāra*, 9th century A.D., Maharaja of Jaipur collection.

here is also exactly the same type as at Payār. The vigorous drummer to the left, playing two *ūrdhva* drums and one *aṅkya*, has his face turned towards Śiva in admiration of his dance movements. The main right hand is in *karihasta* and the main left is bent and held in *tripatāka* near the ear, completely satisfying the definition of *karihasta*. The leg also is in *kuṭṭita*. The text, *karihasto bhaved vāmo dakṣiṇaścha vivartitaḥ bahuśaḥ kuṭṭitaḥ pādaḥ*, is clearly observed in this sculpture. There is a beaming smile, that makes the sculpture all the more charming. One pair

of arms holds the snake *Vāsuki* aloft, above the *jaṭās*, as usually in these dance figures. One of the left hands is in *kaṭihasta*, one fondling *Devī*, while the other two hold the drum and a trident. The *jaṭās* are gracefully arranged and a thick, jewelled necklet adorns the neck, gem-set ear ornaments are on the lobes, a heavy jewelled garland, like the *vanamālā*, sways as he dances. It looks very much like a *yajñopavīta*, in rolled fashion, going over the right arm as in early medieval sculpture elsewhere. The waist zone, with central tassel, and the simple arm-



FIG. 188. *Naṣarāja, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Gwalior Museum.*

lets and bracelets, are the only additional jewellery. The ornaments being very sparse, the figure is all the more effective. It should be assigned to the ninth century, a contemporary of the Payār sculpture.

Gurjara Pratihāra

The Gurjara Pratihāras had a vast empire. Their sculpture represents the might and splendour of the period of their rule. They

continued the art traditions of the Guptas. Gurjara Pratihāra sculpture, representing the early medieval phase of Indian art in the north, is indeed fascinating. Mihira Bhoja of this dynasty was one of the greatest royal personalities in India, and by the issue of the Ādivarāha coins, he almost compared himself to Nārāyaṇa, who, as *varāha*, relieved the misery of the earth. He bore the weight of a mighty empire lightly on his shoulder, even as the *varāha*. Some



youngster, probably Skanda, between his feet, is imitating the hands of Śiva in *abhaya* and *karihasta*. The *jaṭās* are very elegantly tied up with a coronet illuminating his *jaṭāmakūṭa*. The simple jewellery, including the jingling waist zone, with a dangling chain, and the anklets with little bells fixed to them to tinkle as he dances, the jewelled necklace and the heavy earrings, are all very elegantly set on his body. This is indeed a great masterpiece; though here and there broken, it is still a very graceful one.

A temple door-way of the Gurjara Pratihāra period, in the Indore Museum, has its central panel decorated with ten-armed Śiva dancing

FIG. 189. *Narāja* as central panel of door lintel, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Indore Museum.

FIG. 190. *Narāja* dancing beside the bull, Gurjara Pratihāra, 10th century A.D., Indore Museum.

of the finest sculptures may be assigned to his period. The carvings from Abanērī, which have such exquisite grace, should be studied in this context. The famous Ardhanārīśvara, from the collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur, is probably among the most charming medieval sculptures of Śiva (Fig. 187). The sculptor, who could produce such a graceful figure of the hermaphrodite form, could equally well create the dancing form of Śiva, which has always been a great favourite with the Indian sculptor; and we do have very beautiful examples from the region of Rājasthān. Since the empire of the Pratihāras extended over Uttar Pradesh, Rājasthān, portions of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, we may consider sculpture from the various areas. The early medieval dancing Śiva from the Gwalior Museum (Fig. 188) is a very well known masterpiece. It is one of the earliest Gurjara Pratihāra sculptures known. Śiva here dances in the *lalita* pose with his main right hand in *daṇḍa*, the left hand to be in *abhaya* is in *tripatāka* or *khaṭakāmukha*, while the second right hand is in *saṁdamśa* suggesting him as a teacher. The other hands hold objects like the trident and the drum, while the last pair of arms holds aloft the snake Vāsuki. A Gaṇa, watching him intently, plays the *ūrdhva* drums, arranged as a pair, seated beside the bull, which is also gazing at the dance of his master with ecstasy. A





FIG. 191. *Naṭeśa fixed in the maṇḍapa of temple, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abaneri.*

in the *chatura* pose (Fig. 189). A Gaṇa to the right plays the *ūrdhva* drum, while Devī herself keeps time and raises her hand almost in wonder. One of the right arms is in *daṇḍahasta*, while another in *saṁdamśa* proclaims him the teacher. A number of musicians and drummers are shown in small individual panels on the door jambs. There are celestials, like the Dikpālas and Grahas, all in a row, watching the great master of *Gāndharvavidyā*.

A large but broken sculpture of the Gurjara Pratihāra period is Śiva dancing, also from

the same museum. This Naṭarāja is in *lalita* pose (Fig. 190). The bull behind him and a Gaṇa just near his foot, look very happy and proud as a follower of the great master of dance. The carving is very elegant. The decoration is restricted to the minimum so that it is very effective. The Devī belonging to this group, also broken, is preserved in the museum. She is also shown almost commencing a dance. Her maid Vijayā is to her left.

In Badoh, Paṭhārī, the Kakudeśvara Mahādeva temple has not only a row of dancing



FIG. 192. Close up of Nāṭeśa, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Abanerī.

Mātrikās above the lintel, but the door lintel itself prominently presents centrally the Nāṭarāja theme.

One of the earliest representations of Śiva dancing, to be dated in the earliest phase of the Gurjara Pratihāras, is from Mandor in Rājasthān. It is a rock-cut sculpture of Śiva dancing in the centre, Gaṇeśa commencing the group, also dancing, and Chāmuṇḍā, as the last figure composing this frieze. She is also depicted dancing. Māheśvarī is so arranged here that she is to the right of Śiva in the centre in front of Nandi whose horn she fondles. To the left of Śiva is Kaumārī with the peacock behind her. Some of the finest sculptures of the Gurjara Pratihāra come from Lakhamanḍal, near the hills.

From Abanerī, there is a beautiful Nāṭarāja, also dancing in the *lalita* pose, with the main left hand in *karihasta* and the right in *saṁdamśa*, somewhat broken (Fig. 192). The other hands carry the *triśūla*, book, drum, *khaṭvāṅga*, *kapāla* and other objects while a Gaṇa is enthusiastically playing the *aṅkya* and two *ūrdhva* drums. Gaṇeśa mimics his father's dance with his left hand in *karihasta* and with an axe in his right hand, in the place of the *triśūla* carried by Śiva. Now fixed in the *maṇḍapa* of the temple at Abanerī this is a striking figure (Fig. 191). A long *muktāhāra* and a *muktāyajñōpavīta* are additions to the other ornaments that he wears. His hand in *karihasta* is also in *saṁdamśa* to suggest that he is the master, teaching dance. Here he is teaching his son



FIG. 193. *Natarāja, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Minal.*

Gaṇeśa, as he is teaching Skanda in the previous carving.

In the Mahāmāla temple at Minal is another beautiful *Natarāja* of the Gurjara Pratihāra period, six-armed, also dancing in the *lalita* (Fig. 193). Here the main right hand is in *karihasta*, while the left holds what appears to be a flower. His other hands carry the drum, the *triśūla* and other objects. The dwarf Gaṇa, who keeps time by patting the *ūrdhva* pair and *aṅkya* drum, is very interesting, as his face,

completely turned to make it easier to watch the movements of his Lord, clearly indicates abundant enthusiasm. Between the legs, from behind, is seen Skanda, imitating his father in dance. The *jaṭās* are very elegantly tied up, as in Gupta sculpture, and there is an elaborate long garland adorning Śiva who is otherwise very sparsely decorated with jewellery.

From the same place there is another mutilated, though charming image of Śiva dancing,



FIG. 194. *Natarāja*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Gopeśvar.

also in *lalita*, but with eight arms, instead of six, like the former one. The main right hand here is also in *karihasta*, while the main left is almost in *khaṭakāmukha*, against the chest. The next pair of arms is brought close together, just over the waist in *saṁdamśa*, to suggest the teaching attitude. This recalls very much the *dharmachakrapravartanamudrā* of Buddha, where both the hands come together to suggest teaching. While the third pair carries the *śūla* and

khaṭvāṅga, the last pair of arms holds aloft the snake, which raises up its hood in appreciation of the importance shown to it by Śiva. Just behind Śiva, there is the bull. A dwarf Gaṇa, to the left, is playing the *ghaṭa*. The smile on the face of Śiva and the movement in the body, which is very simple, without any elaborate decoration except for the heavy ear rings and artistically arranged *jaṭās* and very austere armlets and bracelets, are indeed very beautiful.

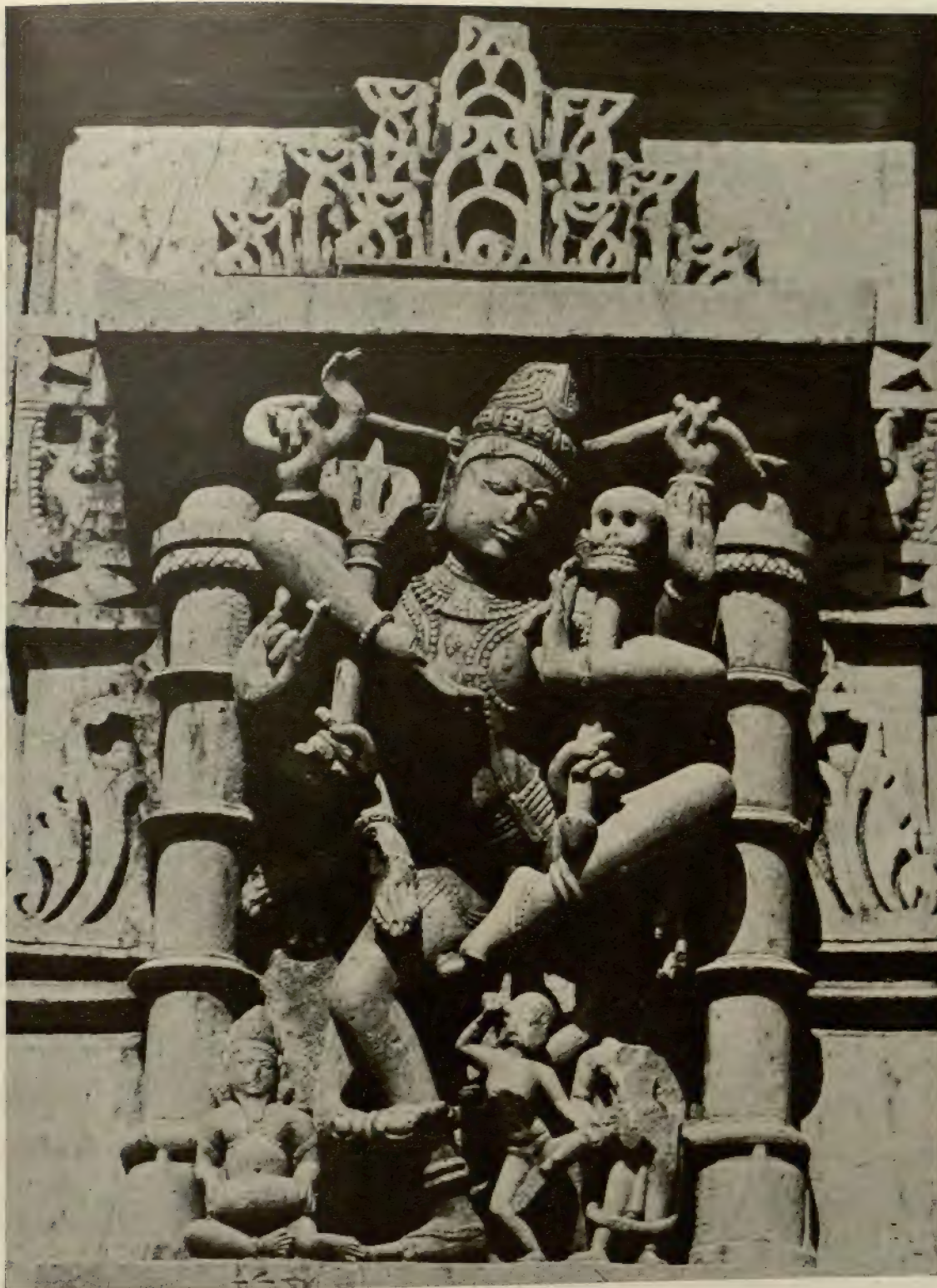


FIG. 195. *Nāṭarāja*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Arthuna.

There is yet another *Nāṭarāja* from Minal with the arrangement of the *jaṭās*, different from the earlier type noticed in the above two cases. The main left hand here is in *karihasta* while the right hand is in *abhaya*. He is six-armed and dances in *ūrdhvajānu*. He holds the *khaṭvāṅga*, *śūla* and *kapāla* in the other hands, while the last hand is held back in what may be *mṛigaśirsha*, to suggest that he is the lord of the *paśus* as *Paśupati*. While a *Gaṇa* to the left, agile and quick in movement, plays a pair of *ūrdhva* drums, another to the right clangs the

cymbals. The *jaṭā* is conical and the arrangement of the ear-rings and ornaments bespeak a slightly later date. This may be assigned to the school of the *Kachapaghaṭas*. The *bhāmaṇḍala*, against which the face is carved, adds grandeur. As in some of the later carvings, a snake is shown entwined around the *triśūla*. The form of the trident however follows the earlier pattern. The outward fork-like prongs start a curve and run up with a slight inward bend and bulge to continue straight on to reach the height of the central prong. In the



FIG. 196. *Natarāja*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Baroli.

later *triśūla* type, the upper part of the prongs is a little curtailed so that it creates a squat appearance.

From Gopeśvara is a very delicately carved charming figure of Nāṭeśa both as a dancer and as a musician (Fig. 194). He is four-armed and places the *vīṇā* against his chest, with the principal pair of arms. The other arms carry attributes. The *jaṭās* are very elegantly arranged. There is variety in the two ear

ornaments on the lobes. A very short lower garment that he wears indicates the *viralanepathya*, which is so much preferred for dance as mentioned in the *Mālavikāgnimitra*. A dwarf Gaṇa enthusiastically pats the *ghaṭa* while the other drummer, who should have been engaged with the drum, is broken and missing in this panel. But what is more interesting, in this example, is that it does not stop with being only Śiva dancing. It is Ardhanārīśvara dancing. On the left can be



FIG. 197. *Natarāja*, *Gurjara Pratihāra*, 9th century A.D., Baroli.

observed the raised breast of Pārvatī and it is only on this side that the garment is very prominent. She has a mirror in the other hand to the left, which is free to carry the attribute. It is very interesting to compare this with a similar dancing Ardhanārīśvara from Bhubaneśvar and more so with the Ardhanārīśvara dancing from the collection of Niraj Jain from Satnā. This being a Khajurāho sculpture, a carving of the Chandella period, there is a prominent depiction of the curled hair composing the beard on the cheek and chin on the side of Śiva,

while the braid and the smooth and lovely feminine part of the face as well as the other contours, unfortunately with the breast broken, depict the feminine half of the hermaphrodite figure.

Of this period, but a definitely more beautiful sculpture and better preserved, though somewhat later in date, is the ten-armed Śiva from the Nilakaṇṭha Mahādev temple at Arthuna, dancing in *ūrdhvajānu* (Fig. 195). The main arms which are brought in together in

patāka and *tripatāka* suggest the meaning of dance. The *triśūla* and *khaṭvāṅga* are held by one pair of arms, while another holds up over the head a snake shooting up its hood in ecstasy. An *akṣhamālā* is in one of the right hands in *patāka*, while one of the right hands is in *sūchī*, the corresponding left being in *latā* or *lola*. Śiva is dancing in *ūrdhvajānu* pose. The jewellery is typically late. It can be assigned to the eleventh century. The *śrīvatsa* on the chest, beaded jewellery and the elaborate necklace and details of the arrangement of the *jaṭās* with a row of skulls as a garland around it, topped by the crescent moon, the equally elaborate waist-zone, the ornaments on the feet and arms, are all typical of this period. To the right of Śiva, at his foot, there is a bearded figure, probably four-faced, representing Brahmā playing the drum. According to the *Pradoshastava* Brahmā keeps time. Right below, to the left of Śiva, is a dancing figure, probably a nymph. A drummer in graceful stance is shown beside this figure playing the *muraja*. There are two short inscriptions below the smaller figures on the pedestal.

From the Ghaṭeśvara temple at Baroli is another very charming figure of Naṭarāja (Fig. 196) dancing in *chatura*. He is here shown ten-armed. Unfortunately all the arms and legs are broken, but yet enough remains to show what a magnificent sculpture this should have been. It can be assigned to the tenth century. The *jaṭā* is conical. There is a *bhāṇḍa*. A hand of the pair that held aloft the *nāga* and a portion of the *nāga* is all that remains and can still be seen. The main left hand is in *karihasta*, while the main right, which should have been in *abhaya* or *saṁdamśa*, is also broken. The other hands should have held the *śūla*, *khaṭvāṅga* and other attributes. One of the left hands, holding the *kapāla*, is still intact. Śiva is dancing in *chatura*. A drummer is shown to the left, playing a pair of *ūrdhva* drums, while another to the right is seated playing cymbals. The pearl-decorated *yajñopavīta*, the large *vanamālā* garland swaying as he dances along with the *uttariya*, which also flutters above, the elaborate necklace and gem-decked ear ornaments, the equally elaborate waist zone, with golden chains and pendants and central tassel, and the pearl bedecked conical *jaṭā*, adding beauty to the smiling face, declare it an extremely fine sculpture of this period.

Belonging to the same period, from the same temple, but probably even more attractive, is

the Naṭarāja dancing in *lalita*, eight-armed (Fig. 197). He dances on a lotus. Even the curvature of the great toe in *kuñchitapāda* is very expressive. The magnificent pearl decoration for the *jaṭā*, the lovely gem-decked ear ornaments, the elaborate courses of necklace, the armlets that decorate him, bespeaking the jeweller's art, the pearl-decorated sacred thread and thick roll-like garland of pearls, swaying as he moves, the armlets, the tiny tinkling bell-bedecked anklets and the waist zone, with beautifully decorated straps of tassels against the thighs, are all magnificent creation. Equally charming is the lotus-decorated *bhāmaṇḍala* or halo behind the head, which has a beaded attractive border. Śiva's main right hand is in *karihasta*, while the left, which should have been in *saṁdamśa* or *abhaya*, is broken. One of the left hands is in *lola*, while a corresponding one is in *sūchī*. A left hand carries the *kapāla*, though all the other hands, except the pair that holds aloft the snake, are broken. A drummer in vigorous action stands up to pat the triple *ūrdhva* drum to his left. Behind him Nandi stands, all appreciation for the dance. There are fluttering cherubs above. Śiva here is dancing as the principal deity in a niche, with Gaṅgā and Yamunā, on either side of the doorway, both on their respective vehicles, the *makara* and *kachchhapa*. This is indeed the most lovely sculpture from Rājasthān, representing Śiva's *tāṇḍava* and a typical example of Gurjara Pratihāra work from the Rājasthān area.

A musical Dakṣiṇāmūrti, quite different from the combination of Naṭarāja and Vinā-Dakṣiṇāmūrti indicated by dancing Śiva carrying the *viṇā* in his hand, which he plays as he dances, is Śiva with his mind entirely taken up with the rhythm of *tāla*, and comes close in spirit to another famous figure of Dakṣiṇāmūrti from the early Pāṇḍyan rock-cut temple at Kaḷugumalai. This sculpture from Baḍoh in the Gwalior Museum is Śiva playing the *ūrdhva* drum, either for his own dance or for that of Devī (Fig. 203). As we know Śiva specially trains his spouse in dance movements in harmony with musical rhythm (see p. 118, 290). He has two *ūrdhva* drums, which he plays even as he is busy with the dance movements of his feet patting the floor. The *karihasta* of the left hand and the *patāka* or *abhaya* of the right are again in the dance pose just a moment before raising the *kuñchitapāda* in *ūrdhvajānu*. The other two hands carry the *triśūla* and *ghaṇṭā*. A beauti-

ful lotus halo behind the *jaṭās* is impressive. The *jaṭās* are arranged in very artistic fashion as in early medieval sculpture. There is a variation of ear ornaments on the lobe. The gem-decked neck ornament, armlets and bracelets, the waist zone with elaborate chains and tassels in gold and pearl, are all very impressive. Similarly tinkling bells on the anklets and the sparse dance dress, limited to *ardhoruka* extending down to the thigh is very significant in his dance pose.

Temple No. 1 from Kirāḍu has exquisite Naṭarāja sculptures, unfortunately broken. Yet enough remains to show how impressive they should have been when intact. There is one with the arms, probably four, broken, representing Śiva dancing in *lalita*, the head is chipped, as also the legs and hands, but there is still enough to show the tasteful jewellery, the magnificent sense of flexion in the body. Down below, in a long frieze, the musicians, forming the orchestra for the dance of Śiva, are represented in very artistic fashion, some playing the drum and others, mostly damsels, using little wooden rods, the tapping of which at

intervals, creates the resonance of *tāla* to keep time. The other one is an equally charming panel, also representing Śiva's dance in *lalita*. Here Śiva is multi-armed and from his elaborate waist-zone dangle little bells to tinkle and keep time.

In the Jhalāwar Museum is a fine tenth century eight-armed Naṭarāja, dancing in *lalita* (Fig. 198). Though his jewellery is very simple, it is effective. He carries the *viṇā* in one of his hands and as a Viṇādhara, Naṭarāja is the lord of both music and dance, demonstrating that neither can exist without the other. The topmost pair of arms holds up the snake, Vāsuki, with his hood raised up. Another pair adjusts the *uttariya*, flowing on either side. The right hand, corresponding to the left carrying the *viṇā*, holds a *pāśa*, while the main left hand is in *gajahasta*, the main right is in *abhaya* or *patāka*, nearer the ear as required in *lalita* to make the *gajahasta* complete. The ear ornament to the right differs from the left suggesting the eternal *Ardhanārīśvara* hermaphrodite form. The *jaṭās* are gracefully arranged as in all early



FIG. 198. Naṭarāja, Gurjara Pratihāra, 10th century A.D., Jhalāwar Museum.



FIG. 199. *Natarāja with vīṇā, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., from Nolēśvar, Jaipur Museum.*

medieval sculptures. The *muktā-yajñōpavīta* is a very long one and gracefully hangs down to the knee. The flat necklet and the delicate necklace are very simple as also the bracelets and armlets. Sparsely ornamented, the figure is a typical tenth century sculpture, full of grace, and a good example of Gurjara Pratihāra work. Two musicians on either side play, one the flute and the other a pair of *ṁrdhva* drums; a harp-shaped *vīṇā* is also held by the flutist slung on his shoulder. There is a devotee, to the right, with clasped hands, wearing a

necklace of *rudrāksha* beads and one holding a *chaurī* to the left. It is not unlikely that the figure to the right, youthful in appearance, wearing *rudrāksha* beads, with hands clasped in adoration and with the head clean-shaven and ear lobes free without any jewel, is Śaṅkara himself, representation of whose portrait became a favourite, along with Vāchaspati-miśra's commentary on Śaṅkara's *sūtrabhāṣya*.

It is well known that Śiva started his dance after destroying the elephant, created by *ābhi-*



FIG. 200. *Natarāja with viṇā*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Museum of Indian Art, West Berlin.



FIG. 201. *Nāṭeśa*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Sās temple, Nāgda.

chāra by the Ṛishis of Dārūkāvana, and tore the hide to spread it around him as a sort of halo. This aspect of Śiva, as Gajāntaka dancing, is shown in a very fine early medieval Gurjara-Pratihāra sculpture from Koṭā, now in the Gwālīor Museum. This is a little terrific. Śiva is sixteen-armed, in the *ālīḍha* pose of the

warrior, his right foot resting on the Nandi bull, where it is directed by Gaṇeśa, who is also in a merry attitude of dance. He wears a large, gruesome garland, interspersed here and there with skulls. The edge of the elephant hide is held up by the top-most pair of arms which usually hold a snake. The other hands



FIG. 202. *Natesa dancing with ūrdhvamedhra*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Cleveland Museum.

hold the bow, bell and skull-cap bowl, pull out arrows from a quiver, hold an *amṛitaghata* or a vessel of ambrosia. Unfortunately, some of the hands are broken and the attributes are not distinct. Devī, seated to his right, looks on with wonder, though with a smile on her lips. No doubt she betrays a slightly frightened look though getting accustomed to the weird dance of her Lord. The figure is very graceful indeed. The turn of the neck and the twist of the body are very beautiful. Behind her stands Skanda, youthful and graceful, with the *triśūla* spear in his left hand. He is easily distinguished by the juvenile arrangement of his hair as *kākapaksha*. The lotus petals adorning the pedestal are very elegantly carved and the figure is, indeed, a fine masterpiece. The *ūrdhvaliṅga* of Śiva is particularly noteworthy, as he is depicted practically nude.

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FIG. 203. *Natarāja playing ūrdhva drum*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Badoh, Gwalior Museum.

A lovely sculpture from the Jaipur Museum is another fine example of Gurjara Pratihāra work, representing Śiva as both Natesa and Viṇādhara in one (Fig. 199). With the principal pair of arms, he plays the *viṇā* against his chest, as he dances in *lalita*. The figure appears ten-armed; though his hands are mutilated, we can still make out the attributes, like the trident, the drum, the snake held aloft, the beautifully arranged *jaṭās*, the handsome necklet and necklace, the pearl-bedecked sacred thread, elaborate strands of waist zone with the central and side tassels, all composed of pearls, dangling, and the large gem-bedecked garland-shaped ornament, swaying as he dances, the heavy ruby-set earrings, are all effective decoration, not too elaborate for this beautiful sculpture. It is of the ninth or tenth century from Nolesar, Sāmbhār in Rājasthān and is now preserved in the Jaipur Museum.



FIG. 204. Śiva as viṇādhara and Devī with anklets getting ready for dance, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., from Lakkamaṇḍal.

Śiva, in his musical mood even as a dancer, is represented by another exquisite Pratihāra sculpture now preserved in the Museum Fur Indische Kunst, West Berlin (Fig. 200). There is a charming smile on the face of Śiva, who enjoys the music he plays and the rhythmic consonance of his feet in action, in dance. He is ten-armed and has a circular halo. One of his left hands is in *saṁdamśa*. He holds the *triśūla*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *ḍamaru* and other attributes. Sarasvatī herself is shown, playing the *vīṇā* to the left, while, possibly Viṣṇu, seated to his right, plays the triple *ūrdhva* drum. Four young sages, undoubtedly Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and

Sanatkumāra, watch his celestial dance. From between his legs, also in dancing mood, peeps baby Skanda.

The early sculpture from Vadhawān in Gujarāt is a lovely sculpture with characteristics of the local style showing elongated limbs, peculiar modelling of the *jaṭās* and so forth. It is Śiva dancing, almost lifting up his left leg in *ūrdhvajānu*. He holds a three-hooded snake in his left hand, while his main hands to right and left are in *abhaya* and *karihasta*. Though mutilated, it is a fine example.

A small frieze from the Sās temple at Nāgḍa



FIG. 205. *Vīṇādhara Nāṭeśa*, *Gurjara Pratihāra*, 9th century A.D., from *Rukhian*, Allahabad Museum.



FIG. 206. *Bhairavī and Chāṇḍī dancing*, *Gurjara Pratihāra*, 9th century A.D., *Kaliñjar*.



FIG. 207. *Nāṭeśa*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 10th century A.D., from *Jogeśvara*.

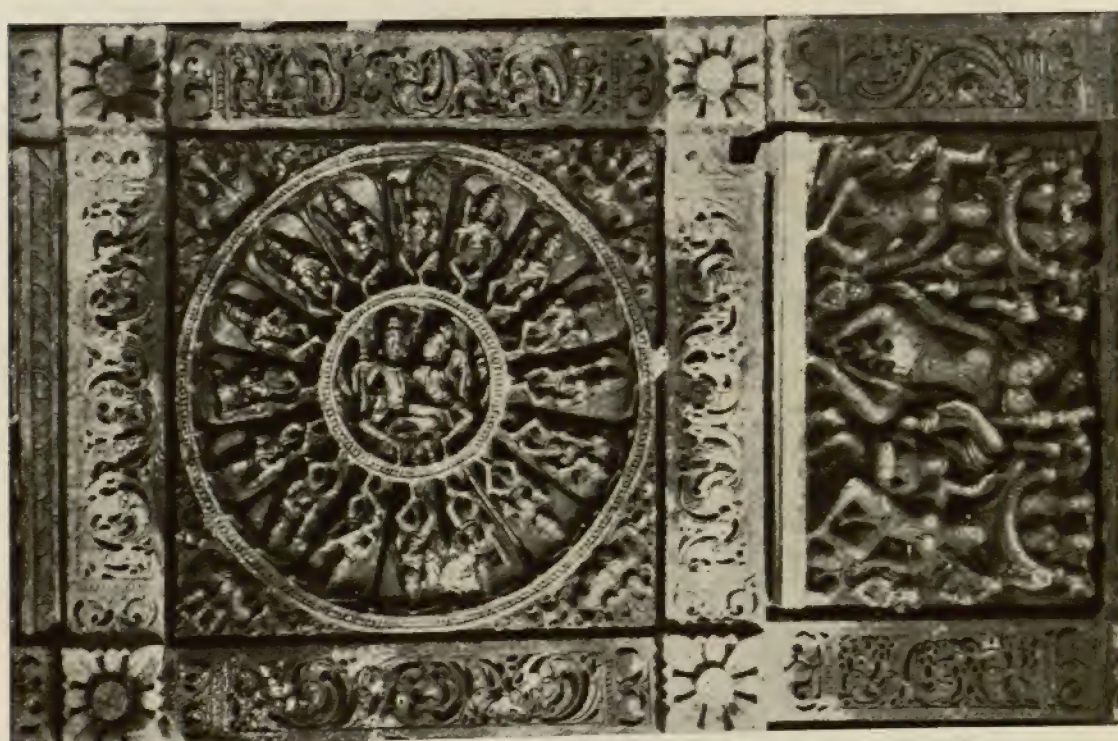


FIG. 208. *Śiva and Devī watching Yoginīs dancing*, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., *Sās temple*, *Nāgda*.

represents Śiva dancing to the accompaniment of music, the musicians in this case completing the orchestra by the flute, the *ūrdhva* drum, the *ālingya* drum and a pair of cymbals sounded. With the right hand in *abhaya* and the left in *gajahasta*, with his right leg almost lifted up to form the *ūrdhvajānu*, Śiva, dances enjoying his own performance (Fig. 201).

An exceedingly interesting sculpture of dancing Śiva in the Cleveland Museum in the United States is a four-armed Śiva, wearing the tiger hide, holding the *triśūla* and *khaṭvāṅga*, with his main arms in *gajahasta* and probably *abhaya* (Fig. 202). The third eye and the *ūrdhvamedhra* are very prominent. The halo still recalls the charm of elaborate Gupta decoration on it.

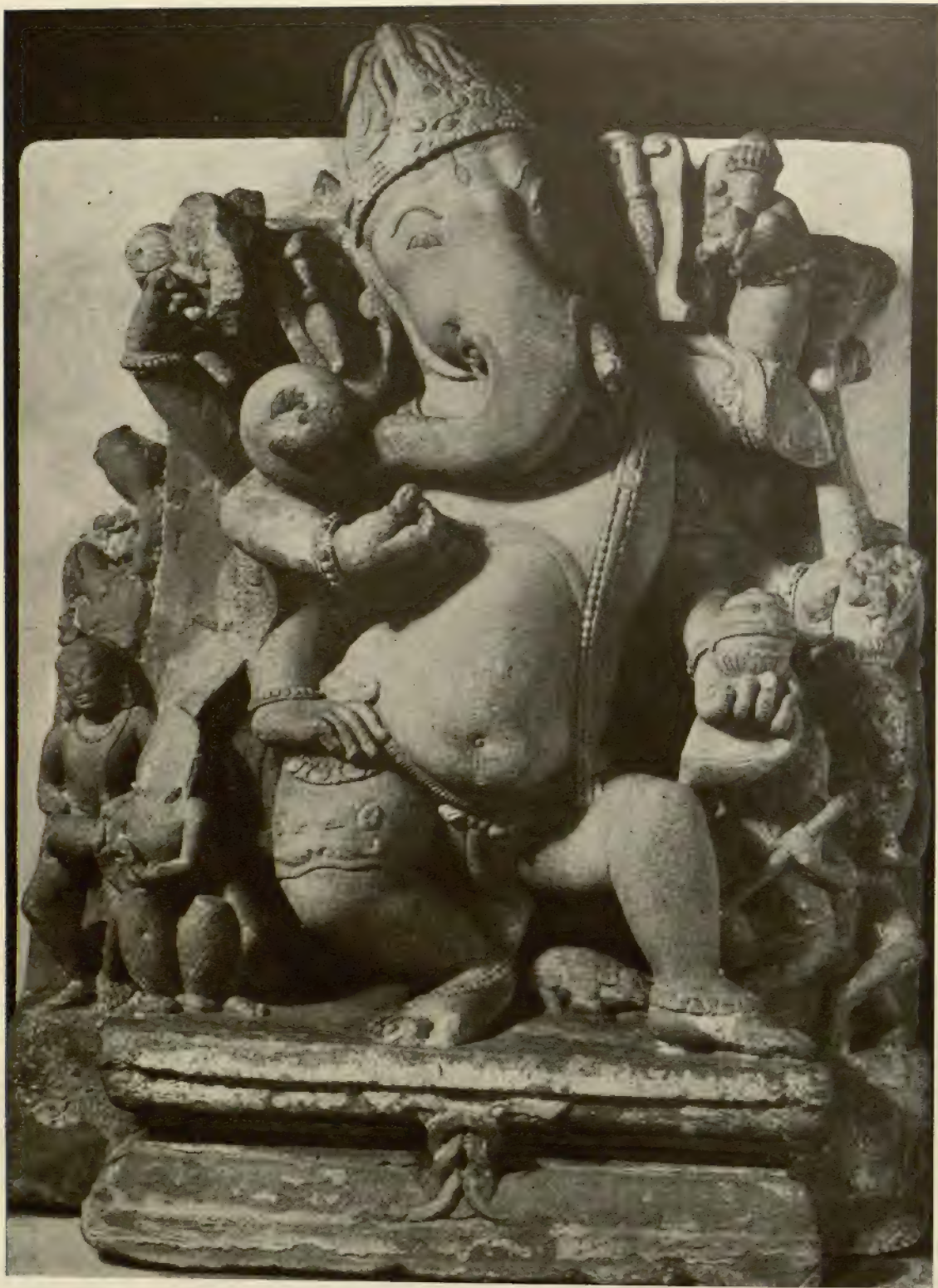


FIG. 209. *Ganeśa, Gurjara Pratihāra, 10th century A.D., Kanpīl, Lucknow Museum.*

The heavy eyelids and the rather pronounced lips, the modelling of the *jaṭās*, the simple arrangement of jewellery and drapery, all indicate a very early date for this beautiful sculpture.¹ It is in all probability from the Mandasor area.

Śiva's love for music and for dance, the soft strain of music from the *viṇā* he holds, and the effect of *āhārya*, or decoration for the dance in his own pupil, Devī, for the perfection of whose performance he is himself the dance master

as well, his music itself lovingly appreciated by Nandi, who looks up appreciatively like the bull in Bengal sculpture in approbation of Śiva's dance, is all suggestively given in a masterpiece of the early Gurjara Pratihāra period from Lakhamanḍal, representing Viṇādhara Śiva with Pārvatī, who is arranging to fix the anklet with tinkling bells on her feet, before commencing her dance (Fig. 204).

1. I am grateful to Dr. S. C. Kala, Director, Allāhābād Museum, for procuring me a photograph of this sculpture.



FIG. 210. *Mātṛikās dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra, 10th century A.D., Mahādeva temple, Kekind.*

FIG. 211. *Brāhmī dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Vermāna, Jaipur Museum.*

A headless Viṇādhara combined with the Naṭeśa type Śiva dancing, with the bull behind him and musical Gaṇas around him, now preserved in the Allāhābād Museum, had originally its head also preserved, as we know from an earlier photograph. It is from Rukhian in Baṇḍa district and a fine example of this type (Fig. 205).

A large and imposing rock-cut sculpture to be assigned to the Gurjara Pratihāra period is Śiva dancing near the Nilakaṇṭha temple at Kaliṇjar in Baṇḍā district. It is eight-armed. The uppermost pair holds up the snake, while *kaṇḍāla*, *kūṭhāra*, his fearful *nāgayajñopavīta* and *nāgaḥāra* as well as the *nāga kuṇḍalas*, the very colossal size itself, all strike terror in the spectator. There are other sculptures of this type also, rock-cut from the same place, sculpturally interpreting the fearful forms of Bhairava in his weird dance. The effect is marvellous. The central one of the three panels represents dancing Chāmuṇḍā, the other two illustrate Bhairava (Fig. 206).

From Aruṇeśvara temple, Kasindra is a beautiful Naṭeśa, dancing in *lalita*, unfortunately with his limbs broken.





FIG. 212. Śiva witnessing dance, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, U.S.A.



FIG. 213. Śiva and Gaṇeśa flanking Mātṛikās dancing, Gurjara Pratihāra, 9th century A.D., Gurgī, Allāhābād Museum.

The sculptural form in the hills is best presented in the group from the Bāleśvara temple at Jāgeśvar in Almorā district (Fig. 207) illustrating Śiva's dance with musical accompaniment, Sarasvatī playing the lute and, probably, Indra the flute, as suggested by Vats.

At Abanerī again, there is a long frieze of Mātṛikās dancing with Śiva in their midst. With the *vīṇā* in his hand, like Viṇādhara, he dances, flanked by Vaishṇavī and Vārāhī, with Māheśvarī and Kaumārī at the extreme

end. The *vīṇā* in his main pair of hands is characteristic of Vīrabhadra, amidst the Mātṛikās. The *triśūla* and *nāga* are held in his other two arms. Nandi is shown behind him. The *vīṇā* has a single string—*ekatāra*. The frieze is continued to show Indrāṇī and Chāmuṇḍā. This is one of the most interesting sculptures of dancing Mātṛikās from Rājasthān and is next in importance only to the rock-cut carving illustrating the same figures at Māṇḍor.

There are again individual sculptures in



FIG. 214. Miniature sculptures representing Natarāja and dancing Mātṛikās flanking large panels, Chaukukya, 11th century A.D., Modhera.

niches, representing the dance of Mātṛikās at Abanerī. One is a very impressive figure of Chāmuṇḍā, dancing on a lotus on the back of a corpse revived. She wears a frightful long garland of skulls and bones. From her long ear lobes hang corpses, *pretakuṇḍala*. Her large, circular, fiery eyes and gaping mouth, with the little finger of one of her arms stuck against it



FIG. 216. Vīṇādhara Śiva dancing, Chaukukya, 11th century A.D., Modhera.



FIG. 215. Ardhanārīśvara dancing, Chaukukya, 11th century A.D., Modhera.

FIG. 217. Śiva dancing in lalita, Chaukukya, 11th century A.D., Modhera.





FIG. 218. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu, Chaulukya, 11th century A.D., Prabhās Pāṭān Museum.



FIG. 220. Śiva and Gaṇeśa dancing, Chaulukya, 11th century A.D., Prabhās Pāṭān Museum.



FIG. 221. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu with Gaṇeśa witnessing, Chaulukya, 11th century A.D., Prabhās Pāṭān Museum.



FIG. 219. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu with Nandi bull, Chaulukya, 11th century A.D., Prabhās Pāṭān Museum.

to express amazement, the *khaṭvāṅga* in her hand and other attributes, are all fearful. Even the musical accompaniment is harsh, as it is a goblin playing a long trumpet. The figure, though worn and broken, is very impressive.

Another lovely sculpture of this Mātrikā group represents Gaṇeśa, with a *phālapaṭṭa* or band for the forehead with crest jewel in the centre, fixed on his temples, his trunk upraised, holding an axe in one of his hands and a *pāśa* in another. His other arms are broken. He dances in *lalita*. To his left, starting the series of Mātrikās, is Brahmāṇī, also dancing in similar pose. The sculptures are excellent examples, typical of Gurjara Pratīhāra work.

Another lovely example of Mātrikās dancing is from the Mahādeva temple at Kekind (Fig. 210). Great action is indicated in these charmingly carved sculptures in vertical rows on the jambs of the entrance, one below the other. While Śiva dances along with the Mātrikās



FIG. 222. Śiva dancing in ūrdhvajānu, Chauḷukya, 11th century A.D., Prabhās Pāṭān Museum.

in these sculptures, Śiva and Pārvatī, seated in the central medallion watch the dance of the Yoginīs, in a *maṇḍala* as carved in the centre of the ceiling of the *maṇḍapa* of the Sās temple at Nāgḍa (Fig. 208). Śiva and Pārvatī are here spectators and connoisseurs of the art of dance. In a panel close to this medallion, Śiva is shown dancing in *chatura*, holding the *nandidhvaja* in one of his left hands; the musical orchestra is complete with the flutist, drummer and musician sounding the cymbals, all around Śiva. There are two Devīs dancing on either side of Śiva, possibly Umā and Gaṅgā.

Among the Saptamātrikā dance figures from Rājasthān, there is probably none more beautiful than the Brāhmī from Varmana now preserved in the Jaipur Museum (Fig. 211). It is a singularly lovely expression of the sculptor's chisel of the noble theme of the dance of the Mātrikās in accompaniment to Śiva.

Equally interesting is a small medallion from Uttar Pradesh from the Lucknow Museum,

representing Sarasvatī, dancing smilingly and playing the *vīṇā*, with accompaniments like the flute and the drum.

An exceedingly fine group of Mātrikās, dancing with Śiva and Gaṇeśa who flank them, is from Gurgī in the Allāhābād Museum (Fig. 213). But the most lovely dancing Gaṇeśa of this period is from Kampil in the Lucknow Museum (Fig. 209). This Gaṇeśa from Kānpur is eight-armed, in the *chatura* stance, carrying the *khaṭvāṅga*, a vessel of *modakas* and other attributes. The modelling of the trunk, the ample paunch, the delicate fingers, the shape of the *jaṭās*, the third eye, the *muktāyājñopavīta* composed of pearls, the very pose and disposition of the hands, are all exquisite. The musical Gaṇas, playing the flute and tapping the drum and the cymbals, are all very happily composed.

The combination of musical and dance figures, to glorify the lord of dance, is clearly illustrated on the lintel of the doorway of the Śiva temple from Sohāgpur where the central figure is Śiva dancing in *chatura* while the ter-

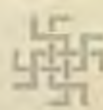




FIG. 223. *Tripurāntaka dancing in sambhāra from Dabhoi gate, Chauḷukya, 12th-13th century A.D.*

minerals illustrate Sarasvatī playing the *vīṇā* and Gaṇeśa dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*.

Śiva dancing amidst Navagrahas, lifting his leg in *ūrdhvajānu*, is the theme on the lintel of the temple doorway from Dudbai in Jhānsī district. Śiva dances, appreciating his own dance. The Grahas are shown in respectful adoration of the Lord of dance and watching with keen interest. From the Kumāra Maṭh at Jaso is four-armed Śiva dancing in *chatura*, his main right hand in *abhaya* and the left in *gajahasta*, the other two carrying *triśūla* and *khaṭvāṅga*.

An exceedingly fine frieze, now in the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, represents Śiva as a connoisseur of art, seated with his consort, also a connoisseur,

watching Bhṛīṅgi dance to the accompaniment of music, the drum and the cymbals (Fig. 212). The offering of dance in the ritual of worship, so eloquently praised in the *Vishṇudharmottara*, is here explained to some degree sculpturally, as to the left of the Śiva-Gaurī group are devotees, male and female, offering garlands and dance itself as an offering as part of ritual in worship.

Chauḷukya

Originally under the Gurjara-Pratihāras, Gujarat continued their traditions under the Chauḷukyas. The tradition of representing Śiva dancing on the door lintel, and, along with the Mātṛikās, on the door jamb, is also seen in such exquisite examples as the doorway from the temple at Kerā in Bhuj, now in the Maharao's garden. Here there are panels, from top



FIG. 224. Śiva dancing on kūḍu niche of façade with Devī and Sarasvatī dancing on either side below, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayesvara temple, Udaipur.

to bottom on either side on the jambs, illustrating the Mātṛikās dancing along with Śiva.

Śiva, as the theme of a lotus medallion in the centre of the *maṇḍapa*, is best portrayed on the ceiling of the *raṅga maṇḍapa* of the Kāmeśvara temple at Auwa. Śiva is four-armed and dances in the *lālita* pose. In the Mahādeva temple at Sonak, Śiva's *tāṇḍava* is represented with great vigour but, unfortunately, the legs are broken.

The beautiful temple at Modhera, where the sculptures are broken, has still something very delicate and beautiful to present. In addition to the large panels of sculpture, there are some smaller ones on the top and on the sides, some of which have Naṭarāja or the Mātṛikās dancing as the theme (Fig. 214). Apart from three or four representations of Naṭarāja dancing (Fig. 217), in these panels, there is one of Ardhanārīśvara dancing with the *śūla* held on the right, composing the Śiva half, and the mirror on the left, forming the feminine part of Pārvatī, which is exceedingly graceful

(Fig. 215). In fact, the dance is in the *lālita* pose. All these figures are four-armed, while some of the individual sculptures of Naṭarāja dancing in the niches on the steps of the *pushkariṇī* tank close to the temple, are sometimes six or eight-armed. One of these smaller panels of Naṭarāja on the side of the temple is a Viṇādhara Naṭarāja, the dance master who is also the grand musician (Fig. 216).

The Prabhāspatan Museum has collected examples of sculpture from the original temple which stood there (Fig. 218, 219, 220, 221). One of these, a fine example of medieval work from Gujarat, shows Śiva dancing in *ūrdhvajānu*, the Nandi beside him looking up with wonder and admiring his dance (Fig. 222). Śiva is here ten-armed.

Another carving shows Śiva, sixteen-armed dancing in *ūrdhvajānu* to the accompaniment of the drum by two celestials, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, flanking him (Fig. 218). Yet another sculpture shows multi-armed Śiva's dance gazed at with wonder by his bull with up-raised head. A *chāmaradhāriṇī* waves the *chaurī* to assuage his fatigue (Fig. 219).

A small fragment of sculpture from this museum shows panels, with Gaṇeśa dancing in one of them, Śiva in another and Gaṇas applauding them, as they peep out from small niches in between the larger panels (Fig. 220).

Another sculpture represents Śiva in an almost impossible position intended for *ūrdhvajānu*. He is two-armed. A Gaṇa is enthusiastically playing the cymbals, while Nandi peeps from a corner. Gaṇeśa is shown standing to the right in a separate niche (Fig. 221).

The famous gateway at Dabhoi is not only a fantasy in medieval Indian architecture, but is also charming for the decorative themes lavished on it by the sculptor. These include multi-armed Śiva, not merely in a dance pose, but as a great victor, fighting and overcoming several Asuras. True to the tradition of medieval Gujarat, where Śiva is represented with at least sixteen arms, if not eighteen, he is shown brandishing the weapons and moving on with powerful strides. The most effective of these is



FIG. 225. Śiva dancing in kūṇḍa niche of façade, close up.

Tripurāntaka, with one of his left arms extended to hold the bow, with innumerable weapons in his other many hands, standing in warrior pose amidst his opponent Daityas, who are almost cowed down by fear and crawl up to him. It is a combination of dance and the blowing of the paeon of victory (Fig. 223).

The long row of Mātṛikās dancing from the Junāgaḍh Museum is more that of the Yoginīs, as it is a larger number composing the group. The tradition of group dancing in Gujarat is so strong—where, as the story goes, *lāsya* was introduced by Ūshā, the bride of Aṇiruddha, as she learnt it from Pārvatī, and the *rāsaman-*

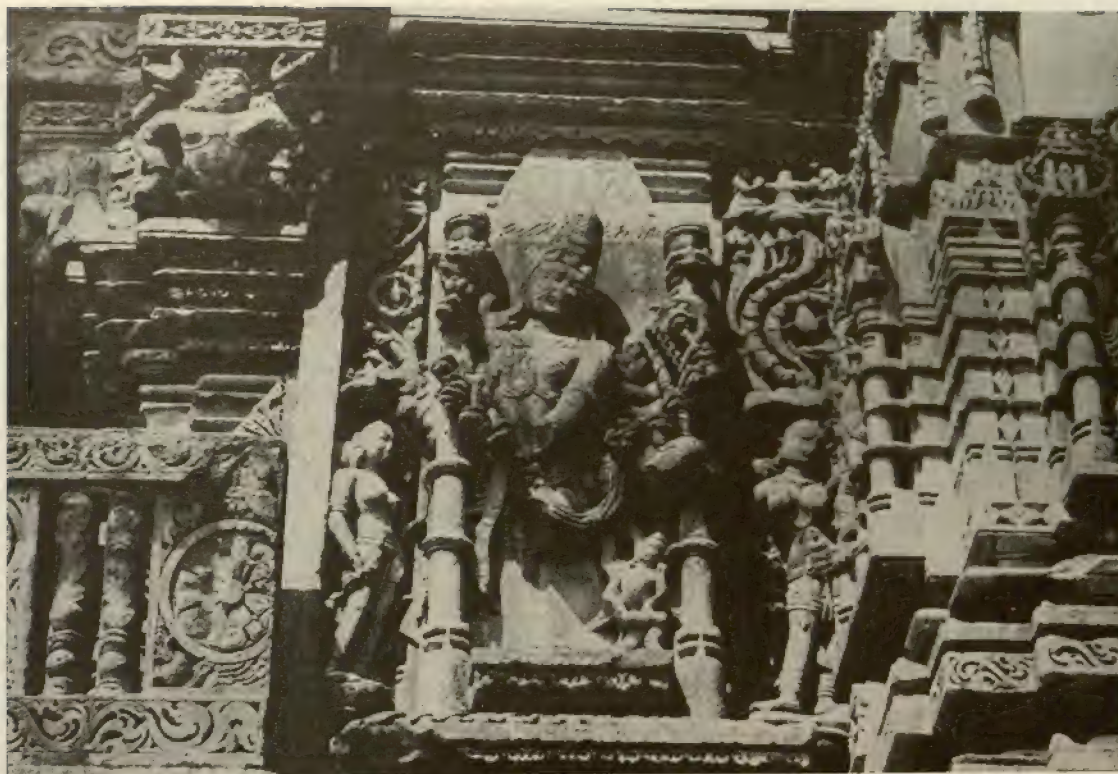


FIG. 226. Multi-armed Śiva dancing from a niche, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayesvara temple, Udaipur.

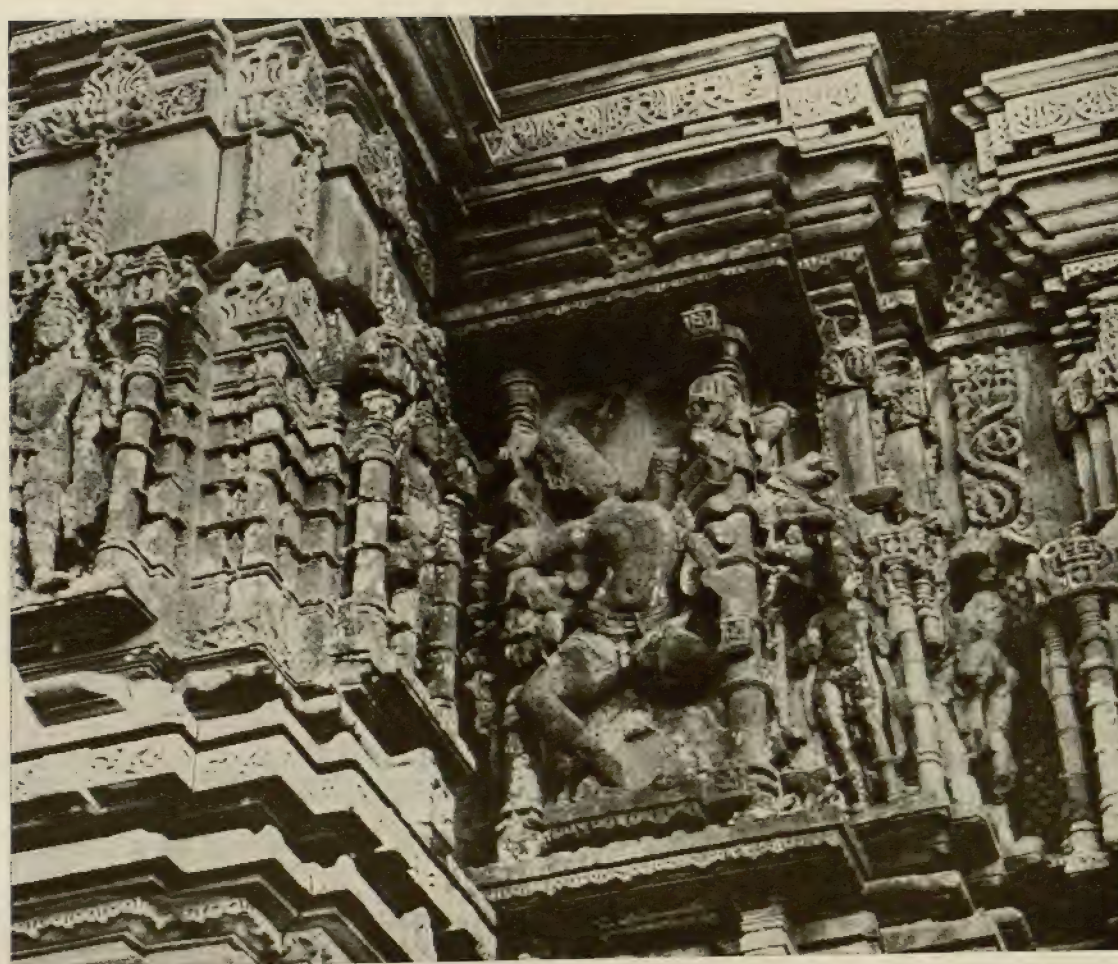
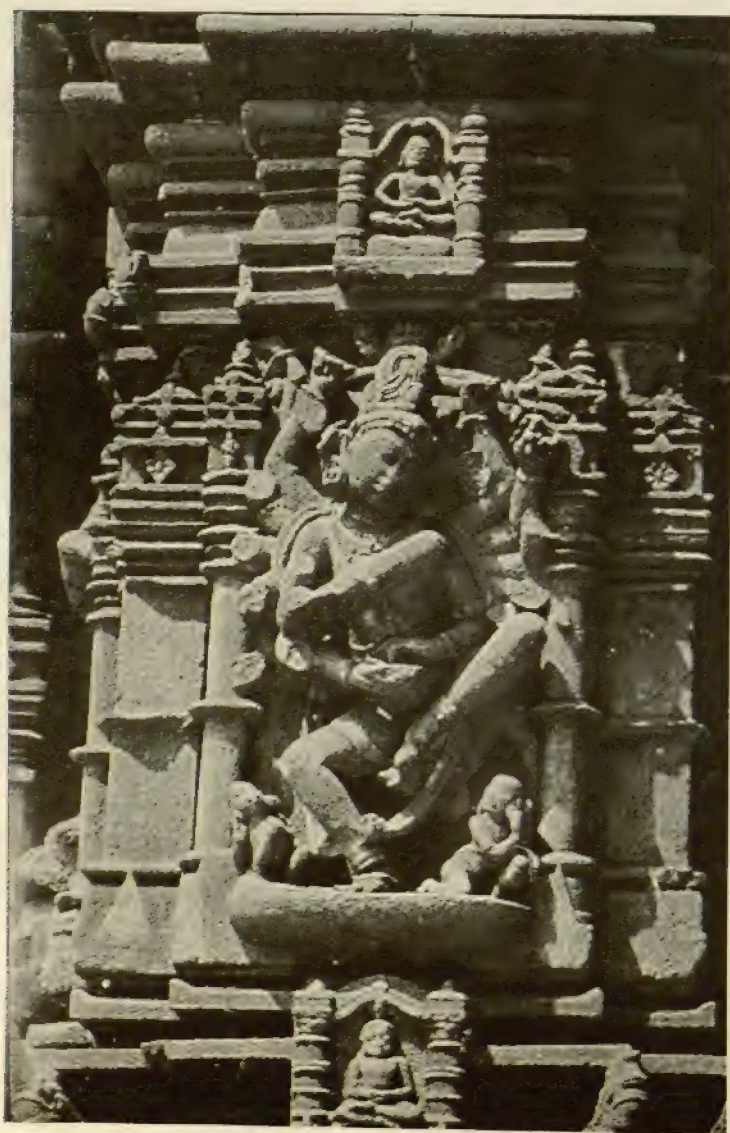


FIG. 227. Multi-armed Śiva dancing from a niche, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Udayesvara temple, Udaipur.



FIG. 228. Śiva dancing, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Gwalior Museum.

FIG. 229. Śiva dancing, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Mārkaṇḍ.



ḍala and *hallīsalāśya*, the favourite of Kṛishṇa and the gopīs, by Kṛishṇa himself—that fine *rāsa maṇḍala* groups in medallions from ceilings of *maṇḍapas* are frequently noticed. An exquisite large example is in the Junāgaḍh Museum.

This tradition of Śiva dancing by himself or with the Mātṛikās is continued in still later carvings of the thirteenth century at Mount Abu in the Tejpal temple, where five Mātṛikās are shown in a group joyously dancing. There are also similar representations of Dikpālas, like Indra, Vāyu, separately shown dancing.

Paramāra

The Paramāra rulers of Mālwa, of whom Bhoja has become a byword as a patron of literature and thought, were also great patrons of art. The temple of Śiva as Udayeśvara at Udaipur is a standing tribute to the aesthetic taste of the rulers of Mālwa. The façade of this temple has a magnificent dancing Śiva in a medallion. Śiva is shown here in *ūrdhvajānu*, multi-armed. Unfortunately the arms are broken, but there is enough left to show what a magnificent piece this must have been, when intact (Fig. 225). Below, on either side, there are representations of Devī dancing to the right and Sarasvatī to the left. This is almost as if to say that between Śiva and Devī, *tāṇḍava* and *lāśya* are distributed, and the finest music for both, as well as the nuances of dance, are supplied by Sarasvatī herself. A swan at her foot, suggests the sense of sweet musical utterance (Fig. 224).

A similar and better preserved Śiva dancing is in the museum at Gwalior. Śiva is ten-armed and in the *ūrdhvajānu* attitude. A Gaṇa is playing the drum to the right, while to the left the cymbals are sounded. The attributes of Śiva include the bow, arrows, *khaṭvāṅga*, *triśūla*, *ghaṇṭā*, *nāgaṇāśa*, while one of the hands is in *alapaḍma*, suggesting wonder (Fig. 228).

The temple of Śiva at Udaipur has the theme of Naṭarāja repeated often. It is multi-armed Śiva in every case,

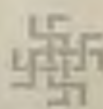




FIG. 230. Śiva dancing, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Mārkaṇḍ, Chandā Dist.

FIG. 231. Śiva dancing, from a niche, Paramāra, 11th century A.D., Ambarnāth.



and, though the arms are generally broken, it can be seen that they were intended to be sixteen (Fig. 226, 227). On the Sāsbāhu temple also, there are representations of dancing Śiva, but it is this multi-armed type, sixteen generally, that is preferred. Two examples of this type, one of them sadly mutilated, on the top of the door of the sanctum are noteworthy. An eight-armed Śiva dancing in the *chatura* pose, carrying the skull, drum, trident, bell and other attributes, with the bull seated, looking up fervently, while a Gaṇa plays the drum to the left, is indeed charming sculpture.

The Ambarnāth temple has in one of its niches multi-armed Śiva dancing in *ūrdhvajānu* (Fig. 229). Unfortunately the numerous hands which composed an imposing figure are all mutilated and lost. The main left hand in *daṇḍahasta* and the main right holding the *kapāla* are preserved. A Gaṇa to the right, at the foot of the lord of dance, looks up, while another similar one sounds the cymbals to tinkle near his ear for the footpats of Śiva. The uppermost pair of arms holding the snake is preserved. The *jaṭās* and the general arrangement including the physiognomy of Śiva bespeak Paramāra tradition.

The temple of Mārkaṇḍ in Chandā district has interesting sculptural wealth in the Paramāra tradition. In fact, two of the Naṭarāja sculptures there are exceedingly interesting. One is an eight-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*, the left leg, unfortunately, broken (Fig. 230). He carries the *triśūla*, *damaru*, *kapāla*; there are cymbals in two of his hands; a pair of arms is broken. The *nāgahāra* is very interesting. A Gaṇa sounds the drum to his left and the Nandi bull, seated to his right, lifts up his head in appreciation and adoration of the dance of his master.

There is another with the body twisted peculiarly (Fig. 231). The eight arms have attributes, like the *damaru*, *triśūla*, *padma*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *kapāla*, his main right hand being in *saṁdamśa* and the left hand in *tarjanī*. The Gaṇa playing the drum is to his right and seated Nandi, gazing with head lifted in wonder, to the left. The position of the left foot indicates the rhythmic foot work, which is the main purpose of this panel of Śiva to show his ability in *nṛitta*. From that point of view, it is very interesting indeed. The *nāgakunḍala*, serpents acting as earring, on the lobes, are very realistic, and a chaplet





FIG. 232. Śiva fondling Pārvatī as he dances in lalita, Chandella, 10th century A.D., locality unknown.

of skulls on his *jaṭās* is an interesting decoration.

Chandella

The Chandellas, or the Chandrātreyas, who were great builders of temples, have left magnificent monuments, both in their capital at Mahoba and at Kharjūravāha, or Khajuraho, as it is now known. The Naṭarāja theme and that of dancing Gaṇeśa are beautifully represented here. Śiva, six-armed, dancing in *lalita*, holding the drum, trident and *khaṭvāṅga*, fondles Pārvatī by tickling her chin and holding her breast (Fig. 232). It is a fine Chandella piece, but the locality from which it came is not clear. Śiva dancing with the Mātṛikās is also a favourite theme in Chandella art. An example is preserved in the Khajuraho Museum. Here Śiva, as the first of the group, has a single pair of arms and plays the *vīṇā* as he dances. Gaṇeśa stands at the rear.

One of the best examples of Chandella sculpture, representing dancing Śiva, is a unique

piece now in the National Museum. It shows Śiva as Harihara in the *ālīḍha* pose of the warrior. It is at once clear from the *jaṭāmakūṭa* to the right and *kirīṭamakūṭa* to the left that the representation is of Harihara. Tripurārī and Murārī are joined together as the very embodiment of warriorhood, to answer the line, *puramathanam muramathanam vande bāṇārīm asamabāṇārīm*. There is no representation like that known anywhere else, and for that reason, being unique, it is specially noteworthy. The *ālīḍha* pose of the warrior is very significant in proclaiming Śiva's or Harihara's dance as the dance of victory (Fig. 233).

There is a dancing Bhairava in the Duladeo temple at Khajuraho which is interesting for the twist of the waist in dance. Next to the Hoysala dancing form of Gaṇeśa from Halebidu, the best is probably the eight-armed dancing Gaṇeśa from the Khajuraho Museum.

The most important and interesting sculpture of this school, is, however, multi-armed Śiva as Ardhanaṛiśvara, dancing with his legs in *pādasvastika*. This sculpture is from the collection of Niraj Jain. The *jaṭās* to the right are elaborately dressed in the style of this region of the Chandellas and Haihayas, and to the left is the braid of Devī. The beard on the right cheek distinguishes the masculine part from the feminine. Even the ear ornament differs. Unfortunately, the breast of Devī to the left is broken. There are musical Gaṇas all around him, near his feet, and also higher up. One of them plays a *vīṇā* which is harp-shaped. It is extremely interesting to note that Śiva is dancing on a figure which resembles Apasmāra. This sculpture does recall a beautiful verse, which describes the wonder of Skanda as to whether the strange hermaphrodite form is father or mother, as he had never observed a beard on the cheek of his mother or the breast on the torso of his father (see p. 130).

Haihaya

The Haihayas, Cheḍis or Kalachuris, as they are known, have greatly contributed to the development of art in medieval India in the area around Bundelkhand. One of their finest temples is the Virāṭeśvara at Sohāgpūr, in former Rewa State. Eight-armed Śiva dancing, holding, in his hands to the left, *ḍamaru*, *triśūla*,



FIG. 233. Śiva dancing in ālīḍah as Harihara, Chandella, 10th century A.D., probably from near Khajuraho, National Museum.

akshamālā and pointing the *tarjanī mudrā*, his hands to the right holding the *dhanus* and *khaṭvāṅga*, the other two suggesting *varada* and *abhaya*, is in the central bracket in the *antarāla*, beyond the *maṇḍapa* of the Virāṭeśvara temple. Though Banerji has described it, he has not illustrated it. He has, however, illustrated another dancing Śiva mutilated but typical of Haihaya style. It is in a niche of the Virāṭeśvara temple and figured as plate 12 in his 'Haihayas of Tripuri'.

Another image of dancing Śiva is in the central panel of a door lintel, with the Navagrahas flanking him, near the temple of Somanātha at Bargaon in the Jabalpur district. This Śiva is ten-armed and the bull is shown to the left. It is illustrated as plate 39b in the same book.

In the Vishṇu temple from Suraya, Śiva is shown dancing in the second tier, above the lintel, as the main lower tier is completely occupied by the Trimūrtis, with Vishṇu on Garuḍa in the centre, and the Navagrahas. Here Brahmā is depicted playing the *vīṇā*, in the first of the three panels composing the frieze, Śiva dancing in the central one, and Skanda in the last. In between the panels, there are two groups, one of Gaṇeśa and Śakti, and another of Vishṇu and Śrī. There are other musical celestials, sounding the drum and playing the flute. It is well known that Indra, Brahmā, Śiva, Skanda, Gaṇeśa, Vishṇu and others are the preceptors of this great art of dance and music, and appropriately they are shown. Even the ceiling in front of this entrance has dance figures and the whole atmosphere is filled with music and dance. The emphasis is again on Śiva as the supreme dancer.

In a temple from Nohada which is also a typical Haihaya monument, there is an exquisite eight-armed Naṭeśa, dancing in *chatura*, carrying the *damaru*, *śūla*, *khaṭvāṅga*, and other attributes, the main hands being in *saṁdamśa* and *gajahasta*. The left hand, in *gajahasta*, is in *kartarīmukha*. A musical Gaṇa to the left plays the flute, while the Nandi bull, cosily seated to the right, looks up in appreciative satisfaction (Fig. 234).

Bherāghāt, which is famous for the sixtyfour Yoginīs, all of them inscribed and excellent sculptures of the Haihaya school, has a fine though sadly mutilated Naṭarāja (Fig. 235).

From Bargaon in the Jabalpur district there is a Śiva dancing in a ruined temple north of the village. This is a representation of four-armed Śiva in *vaishṇava sthāna*, carrying the *śūla* and *khaṭvāṅga*, the main hands being in *abhaya* and *gajahasta*. The Nandi bull is shown to his right and the *nāga*, with upraised hood, appreciates the rhythm of the tap of his feet. It is a simple, though effective, sculpture.

The tradition of representing Śiva dancing in the central panel of the lintel, amidst Navagrahas, is again here present. Multi-armed Śiva dances in *chatura*. It is a beautiful doorway and



FIG. 234. *Nāṭarāja*, Haihaya, 11th century A.D., Nohada.



FIG. 236. *Nāṭarāja on bull dancing*, Haihaya, 11th-12th century A.D., Malhār.



FIG. 235. *Nāṭarāja*, Haihaya, 11th century A.D., Bherāghāṭ.



FIG. 237. *Gajāntaka dancing to the accompaniment of music*, Gāhaḍavāla, 12th century A.D., Rukhiyan.



FIG. 238. *Natarāja*, 18th century A.D., Chāmbā, National Museum, New Delhi.

presents Haihaya workmanship in an effective manner. There are several other dance figures on the jambs and prominence is given in this Śiva temple to Śiva's dance aspect as in Paramāra, Eastern Gaṅga and other temples.

A certain influence from the Orissan territory is noticed in the dancing form of Śiva from Malhar in Bilāspūr district (Fig. 236). It represents Śiva in *ardhaparyāṅka*, dancing on the bull as in Bengal or in Orissa, and is therefore extremely interesting. A little Chālukya influence is also obvious in the treatment of the *jaṭās*, and in the way weapons are held. Though mutilated, the sculpture is extremely interesting on this account.

The Śiva temple at Chanderi is another monument of the Haihayas. Here also, there have been found several images of dancing Śiva. One of them, with eight arms, has the main hands in *saṁdamśa*, with *akṣhamālā*, and in *karihasta*, respectively to the right and left, the others carrying attributes, like the drum,

triśūla, *vajra*, *kapāla*, *nāgaṇḍā* and *khaṭvāṅga* to the right. Nandi is seated, looking up with appreciative wonder, while a Gaṇa to the left plays the cymbals. Though a little worn the sculpture is full of movement. Śiva is dancing in *lalita*.

Another sculpture of four-armed Śiva has the main hands, probably in *saṁdamśa* and in *karihasta*, the others carrying attributes, which are now broken and lost. Nandi is to his left and the Gaṇa, clanging cymbals, to the right. Śiva's left leg is raised in *ūrdhvajānu*.

A sculpture recently acquired by the National Museum is almost exactly like this example. Śiva is here six-armed, with the main arms in *saṁdamśa* or *abhaya* and *varada*, the rest carrying attributes, like the drum, the *triśūla*, *nāgaṇḍā*. The Nandi bull is seated to his right and the Gaṇa, to the left, plays cymbals. Śiva dances in *lalita*.

Yet another sculpture, an unusual one re-

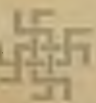




FIG. 239. *Natarāja, Kōngrā, 18th century A.D., Allāhābād Museum.*

presenting the dance of Tripurāntaka, was recently obtained by the Delhi police. It shows Śiva dancing in the *ālīḍha sthāna*, holding the bow, the *dhakkā*, *khaṭvāṅga* and other attributes. The main right arm is in *saṁdamśa*. Gajāśura is peculiarly represented as an elephant-headed demon, whom Śiva is tearing up with his two hands. The Tripuras are suggested by three pictures, within a square framework, which he is destroying with his bow. The left hand, to pull the string of the bow, is drawn near to his ear, while the bow itself almost touches his crown of *jaṭās*. This is a very unusual representation, but, nevertheless, most interesting. It is the dance of victory, the victory not only over the Tripuras, but also over Gajāśura, and we know Śiva danced on both occasions.

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Gāhaḍavāla

The Gāhaḍavālas who succeeded the Gurjara Pratihāras in the Gangetic area of Uttar Pradesh continued the art tradition of their predecessors. The art of their time is very close to that of the Chandellas, the Haihayas, the Paramāras and the Chāhamānas. A typical 12th century sculpture from Rukhiyan shows ten-armed Śiva dancing in *lalita*, carrying attributes like the drum, sword, trident, bell, shield, *nāgaṇāśa* and *khaṭvāṅga*. As the representation is that of the dance of victory after destroying Gajāśura, the upper pair of arms, usually carrying a snake, holds up the elephant hide, while the main pair of arms, poses *daṇḍahasta* and *abhaya*. On either side of Śiva are Gaṇas, one playing the drum and the other cymbals. The Nandi bull looks up



FIG. 240. Śiva's twilight dance witnessed by Devī enthroned, and applauded by all the celestials, Kāngrā, 18th century A.D., Indian Museum, Calcutta.

eagerly towards his master in appreciation of his dance (Fig. 237).

Late Medieval Paintings from the Hills

The tradition of sculpture in the hills, already observed in the earlier panels, like those from Jāgeśvara in the Śiva temple, is continued in the late medieval period of which an example comes from Gopeśvara. It is a figure of Viṇādhara and Naṭarāja combined, dancing in *lalita*, with the *viṇā* in two of his hands, the rest of his hands carrying the *damaru*, *triśūla*, *khaḍga*, *kheṭa*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *dhanus* and *kapāla*. A Gaṇa plays the *ūrdhva* drum, to his right, and another the cymbals, to the left. Nandī watches the dance. The features, modelling, workmanship, decorative details, all give an idea of the late date of the sculpture, about the fourteenth century and it is typical of workmanship in the hills.

This tradition is continued in the hills and can be observed in paintings portraying the theme. There is one factor here which is especially noteworthy, that Śiva is never represented multi-armed. He looks quite a normal human being. While Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, Kārtikeya and other gods are provided with more than one pair of arms, Śiva has only a single pair of arms. A painting of the Chambā school is extremely interesting. Even the snake on his neck, as a garland, wriggles in his dance. The leopard hide also moves in the rhythm of his dance. His *jaṭās* sway in frolicsome mood, almost like snakes. The third eye of Śiva is prominent. Gaṇeśa plays the lute, Skanda sounds the drum and Umā the circular metal drum. A Gaṇa plays the flute on one side, while on the other, a number of them sound different musical instruments, like the bugle, kettle drum, large drum, cymbals and so forth.

Śiva's devotee, either Kārtavīrya Arjuna or Bāṇa, plays innumerable drums simultaneously, with his numerous hands. Nandi watches with rapt attention. This is a beautiful painting of the Chambā school (Fig. 238).

Another painting of the Chambā school shows Śiva as a witness of dance, a connoisseur appreciating the dance of the celestial nymphs, like Rambhā or Urvaśī. It is a mural from the dilapidated palace from Chambā (Fig. 241) now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi.

A painting of the Kāngrā school, from Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, which is unfortunately unfinished and is more a drawing than a painting, shows again two-armed Śiva, dancing with the leopard hide as his dress, the gliding snakes on the neck and shoulder, as his ornament. His *jaṭās* sway in tune with his motion. It is dance motion. Sarasvatī plays the *vīṇā*, Skanda sounds a circular metallic drum, Gaṇeśa thrums a stringed instrument, and also a small hand drum, while other Gaṇas with peculiar faces of animals, like the goat, monkey and parrot sound the bugle and kettle drums. Kārtavīrya Arjuna or Bāṇa sounds innumerable drums with his several arms.

Another painting from the Allāhābād Museum belonging to the Kāngrā school (Fig. 239) comes very close to the similar picture from Bhārat Kalā Bhavan which is more a drawing than a painting. The painting from the Allāhābād Museum represents Śiva with a single pair of arms dancing, a dance of pure joy, clad in leopard's as well as elephant's skin, his *jaṭās* swaying, the snake on his neck and shoulder crawling forward, the moon sitting lightly on his crest to the right.

Skanda plays a hand drum, Devī the lute, the Gaṇas, one with a parrot's beak, sounds a hand drum, while two Gaṇas, monkey- and tiger-faced, blow the trumpet, a goat-faced one sounds a kettle drum, while the greatest of Śiva's devotees, Bānāsura, uses his many arms to sound numerous drums suspended from his neck.

A very lovely painting, from the hills, representing Śiva's dance, is one of the Kāngrā school from the Tagore collection illustrated by Coomaraswamy (p. 136 Fig. 5). It is very elaborate and, following the *Prodashastava*, depicts Devī seated on a throne, with a number

of nymphs surrounding her in respectful attention. In front of her, on the *adrisabhā* or the hall of dance on the mountain, Śiva dances. The musical accompaniment closely follows the description in the hymn. Sarasvatī plays the *vīṇā*, Brahmā keeps time, Viṣṇu plays the *mṛidaṅga*, Indra sounds the flute, Gaṇeśa sounds cymbals, while several celestials and devotees clasp their hands and bow to him in adoration. A whole host of comic looking Gaṇas, with animal and bird faces, blow the pipe, beat the drum and sound other musical instruments. Among the celestials watching are the sun and the moon, Skanda and others. This is coloured delicately and is probably the best representation of dancing Śiva from the hills. Here his *jaṭās* are not loose, but tied up, though the tradition of the leopard skin around his waist is followed. The snake on his neck sways, along with his dance movement.

An almost similar one but more elaborate, and slightly earlier in date than the one illustrated by Coomaraswamy, is a Kāngrā painting from the India Museum collection, illustrating more graphically the *Pradoshastava* (Fig. 240). It shows a greater variety of celestial attendants, Rishis, Gaṇas and maids waiting on Devī. Verses from the *pradoshastava* are actually written in Nāgarī as legend, both at the top and at the bottom, to elucidate the theme of the picture. There is only the leopard's skin shown in the picture, while there is also the elephant hide here added as Śiva's attire. In this, the movement of Śiva himself and the hosts, Gaṇas as well as the celestials, is even more dynamic than in the other one. This, in fact, is the best painting of the Kāngrā school to illustrate this important theme of the twilight dance of Śiva.

A painting in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art represents Śiva dancing. This belongs to the Basohli school (c. 1730 A.D.). It represents Śiva dancing in a rather weird fashion, with a long garland of cut heads on his neck. The *jaṭās* radiate around his head, as they swirl in his dance, and almost form an effect of solar rays, around the disc in folk art. The large eyes look a little fierce, and Śiva, though two-armed like all the other figures of his in paintings from the hills, is here represented in a rather terrible aspect. A lion skin around his waist is as is to be expected in a portrayal of Śiva. Attendant figures are shown on either side; they include Brahmā, Gaṇeśa, Nandīśvara, the youthful saints, Sanaka,



FIG. 241. Śiva witnessing dance, 18th century A.D., Chamba mural, National Museum.



FIG. 242. Natarāja in wild Bhairava form dancing, Kāñgrā, 18th century A.D., Cleveland Museum.

Sananda, Sanātana, and a drummer. The dog at the feet suggests the Bhairava aspect of Śiva, dancing at the finale of a *kalpa*. This painting in folk style is very characteristic of the Basohli school, which revels in such delineation (Fig. 242).

THE NATARAJA CONCEPT BEYOND INDIAN FRONTIERS

Introductory

If Indian religion and culture have travelled abroad and found expression in a rich efflorescence of art and literature in countries far away across the sea, a study of the development of phases of this art and culture at home in the mainland of India would never be complete without a notice of the salient features of important facets of it abroad.

It is well known that the text of the famous inscriptions in Cambodia, meticulously edited by Professor Coedes in several volumes, is in perfect Sanskrit, and in itself constitutes an interesting study of parallels from *kāvya* literature, especially Vālmiki, Vyāsa and Kālidāsa. The same applies to the inscriptions from Java and from Bali. The texts from Bali, edited by Sylvain Levi, reveal how the South Indian version of the *Mahābhārata* was popular in the island as seen by the occurrence of the *dhyānaśloka* of Vyāsa, *abhraśyāmaḥ piṅgajātābaddhakalāpaḥ prāṁśur daṇḍi kṛiṣṇamṛigatvakparidhānaḥ sākshāllōkānpāvayamānaḥ kavimukhyaḥ pārāśaryaḥ parvasu rūpam vivṛiṇotu*. The version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the stories of the *bālalīlās* of Kṛiṣṇa, the lament of Aja for Indumatī, the exploits of Abhimanyu and Arjuna as well as their loves, and the heroic deeds of Ghaṭotkacha are all favourite themes in Javanese literature and dance drama. The musical orchestra of Java, as well as that of Thailand and Cambodia are close to Indian, and what has sometimes disappeared from India centuries ago is still alive in some of these far away countries. The *vīṇā* still lives in harp shape in Burma, and helps us to visualise the musical instrument used by Samudragupta, as found illustrated on his coin, corroborating the extraordinary musical talent of the emperor, claimed in the Allāhābād pillar inscription.

The palaeography of one of the early inscriptions as well as the short text announcing the creation of a *taṭāka* or a large reservoir for water by Mahendravarman from Kambuja, i.e. the Bangkok Museum stone inscription of Mahendravarman, come so close to a similar short inscription, in very similar script, of a

king strangely bearing identical name in Pallava territory in South India, that it makes one gaze at this coincidence, naturally, with wonder. The contemporary date of the Kambuja inscription is all the more interesting. Some of the parallelisms of Kālidāsa in the text of Cambodian inscriptions of very early date, pointed out by B. R. Chatterjee, are so interesting, that one cannot but pause to think of a very early date for the poet, whose text should have travelled and gained popularity in lands so far away. In India, we know the parallel of Mayūra's *Sūryaśataka* inscribed probably on twelve pillars of a pavilion (*maṇḍapa*) for Sūrya at Kāñchīpuram in the early Chōla period within three centuries of the poet's date.

Really staggering is the influence of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarāchārya, who expounded the highest monistic thought and achieved a synthesis of cults in India, which he unified culturally, socially, philosophically and in ritualistic practice in the most extraordinary manner within the brief span of his short life on earth in the 8th century. His portrait of the 8th century from Kāñchīpuram is followed up by portraits of his in Rājasthān within a hundred years of his existence; and a little later there is his *Bhājavogindastotra*, quoted in the Sevadi Chāhamāna copper plate grant of Ratnapāla. Much more interesting and inspiring is the fact that he was known and adored during his own lifetime in such distant lands as Fu-nan, where among the many inscriptions in Pallava Grantha, there is a reference in one of the reign of Indravarman of the 9th century, where Śivasoma the royal *guru* is described as a pupil of Bhagavān Śaṅkara *yenādhūtāni śāstrāni bhagavachchhaṅkarāhvayāt niśśeshasūrimūrdhālīmālāliḍhāṅghripaṅkajāt*. The reference to the rulers of Kāñchī, the Pallavas, in an inscription of Jayavarman I in the 7th century, shows the influence, both cultural and aesthetic, from the capital of Narasimhavarman Pallava, where the university, as at Taxilā or Nālandā, was so far famed as to attract pupils from great distances, like Mayūraśarman Kadaṁba; and the sacred institution of Śaṅkarāchārya at

Kāñchī set an example of noble dissemination of knowledge, an act that has continued till the present day, in unsullied glory, with the present Āchārya as a leading embodiment of immaculate thought and vision.

The names of the early rulers from Java and Borneo end in *Varman*, just like those of the Pallava rulers, like Mahendravarman, Narasiṃhavarman or Paramēśvaravarman. From Cambodia, we have such names as Jayavarman, Indravarman, Rudravarman and Bhavavarman. Pūrṇavarman, Mūlavarman and Bhadravarman are royal names, respectively from Java, Borneo and Champā. The Pallava tradition of naming the deity established by the king after his own name, like Rājasimheśvara, and continued by the Chōlas in epithets like Rājarājeśvara, occurs also in Champā and Cambodia, as respectively in Bhadeśvarasvāmin, named after Bhadravarman and in Indreśvara named after Indravarman. Even temples styled Indreśvaragṛiha, after the king and his deity, recall appellations like Rājasimheśvaragṛiha. The epithet *dharmamahārāja*, as in the Cho Dinh rock inscription of Bhadravarman of Champā, has parallels in the *Dharmamahārāja* appellation of the Pallava, Kadam̃ba, Nolamba and Western Gaṅga monarchs in South India. Pallava Śivaskandavarman has the epithet *dharmamahārājādhirāja*. The Western Gaṅga Mādhava I was the son of Śrī Koṅkaṇivarma Dharmamahādhirāja.

There is a significant epithet *Śivapādaśekhara* of the Chōla emperor Rājarāja, so great a devotee of Śiva, that he described himself as adorned by the feet of the lord as his crest jewel, to understand which, earlier Pallava history offers the clue in the *biruda* of Nandivarman, whose head is marked by the lotus feet of Hara on it, *haracharaṇasarojottamsachih-nena mūrdhnā*. All this has a greater meaning when studied in the context of Śiva's footprints from Indo-China. The Bayang inscription graphically describes how the majesty of the hillock is enhanced by the mark of the Śivapada on it and a stele close to it has Śiva's footprints engraved with a line in Pallava Grantha characters *Śivapadadvayāmbhojam*, 'Śiva's pair of lotus feet'. The Bayang inscription graphically describes how the majesty of the hillock is enhanced by the mark of the *Śivapada* on it, *ayañcha mūrdhnā sphuṭaratnamālīnā padam dadhāno girīśasya bhūdharaḥ upaiti loke bahu . . . manyatame hi sannatiḥ*. The idea of carrying Śivapada on the head was in the air and has expression

not only in South Indian inscriptions but in far off lands in South East Asia.

The name Viravarman and Chitrasena in the Phu Lokhom inscription of Chitrasena recall Viravarman and Virakūrchavarman and Chitramāya and Chitramegha of Pallava inscriptions. The term Kurumbā, associated with the Pallavas, strangely enough, occurs in an inscription of Kulaprabhāvatī, queen of Jayavarman of Fu-nan that mentions Kurumbanagara (Neak ta Dambang Dek inscr.). In the Tan Kran inscription of Jayavarman, the mention of the king of Kāñchī lends colour to the name of the deity, Āmratakeśa, when it is remembered that the Śiva at Kāñchī is also Āmreśvara, i.e. Ekāmreśvara, the Lord of a single mango tree. The name Koṅgavarman in the Bayang temple inscription recalls at once Koṅgaṇivarman of the early Kadam̃ba dynasty and Koṅgaṇivarman of the Nolamba genealogies. Koṅga, Koṅgaṇi are closely associated with the western coast of India, Konugundu and Kadam̃ba. Chālukya, Pallava influences are evident in Indochina and Java. The reference to Kuṅjarakuṅjadeśa in the Chaṅgal inscription from central Java, identified with Kuṅjaradarī of Varāhamihira's *Bṛihatsamhitā* and located on the frontier of Travancore and Tirunelveli district in South India, as well as the name Gaṅgarāja in the My-son stele inscription from Champā echoing Gaṅga kings of the Western Gaṅga dynasty, suggest close relations between these countries of South Asia and South India.

Indonesia

There is a special predilection for the worship of ṛishis in the countries of South Asia, particularly of Agastya, Vālmiki and Vyāsa. The only temple for Vālmiki is in Tra Kieu in Champā. The ṛishis in Javanese and Cambodian sculpture are fashioned exactly like the ṛishis in Pallava and Chōla sculpture. The worship of Agastya is emphasised, along with that of Śiva, at Vedāraṇyam in South India. Similarly Agastya is prominent in the Dārāsūram temple. The Podiyal hills are specially associated with Agastya, whose wont it is, as Kālidāsa puts it, graciously to bless the Pāṇḍya king by kind enquiries after the successful *avabhrītasnāna* or bath after a sacrifice—*sausnātiko yasya bhavatyagastyah*. The cult of Bhaṭṭaraguru in Java is that of the form of Śiva as a holy sage, specially Agastya. Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri has a long and interesting paper on the cult of Agastya in Java. In fact, Agastya who was



taken to be the eternal priest, as the civiliser of the South, was deified, and his form was carried with devotion and fervour by the colonists. Even the Buddhist monument at Barabudur presents Agastya in an honoured place towards one end of the vessel in the illustration of a *Jātaka* story where the scene is one of people travelling from one country to another by a ship. The figure of Agastya is a symbol of Indian culture and thought carried overseas. Agastya as *pītasāgara* also epitomises this idea of safely crossing the seas.

Considered against this background, it is interesting to note how the traditions of Naṭarāja, along with other iconographic forms of Śiva, have travelled specially from South India to beautify monuments in these countries, that are so close in culture but far away in distance. If the whole series of *karaṇas* of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* have an expression in the temple of Śiva, the central one of a triple shrine dedicated to Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu, on the model of similar earlier Pallava shrines, noted even in inscriptions, like that from Maṇḍaga-paṭṭu recording *brahmeśvaraviṣṇulakṣitāyatanam*, it does satisfy our curiosity when we study details of its features. In the same order of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, the temple at Prāmbaṇam has a central shrine for Śiva and for Viṣṇu next, the first being for Brahmā.

The entire story of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa is beautifully narrated in two of these shrines, while in that of Śiva, there is this very interesting feature of the dance *karaṇas*, elaborately represented (Fig. 1). This is as it should be, as Śiva, as Naṭarāja, is the Lord of dance. This precedes by two centuries even the earliest representation of *karaṇas* of Śiva in the Bṛiha-diśvara temple at Tañjāvūr in South India. Similar representation at Chidambaram, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Vṛiddhāchalam and other places is even more distant in time than the *karaṇa* series at Prāmbaṇam. It cannot however be forgotten that during the time of Dantivarman Pallava, dance was so very much patronised that in the Bāhūr temple near Pondicherry, there are several *karaṇas* delineated in the temple there. There is here, for instance, a danseuse presenting *ardhasvastika* with a hand in *karihasta*, giving this a precedence over the text *kaṭihasta*, accepted by Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, though well aware of both the readings, *karihasta* and *kaṭihasta*. It is a pity that in 1948, when I had the good fortune to be there, the whole group of temples was a heap of ruins, as the upper part of it had badly collapsed and was being carefully set up again. The panels representing *karaṇas* (Fig. 2, 3, 4, 5), however, are mostly preserved and it requires an elaborate study, especially a comparative one, with the



FIG. 1. Karaṇas from the outer wall of Chaṇḍī Prāmbaṇam, 9th century A.D., Indonesia.



FIG. 2. Karaṇas from the outer wall of Chaṇḍi Prāmbaṇam, 9th century A.D., Indonesia.



FIG. 3. Karaṇas from the outer wall of Chaṇḍi Prāmbaṇam, 9th century A.D., Indonesia.

FIG. 4. Karaṇas from the outer wall of Chaṇḍi Prāmbaṇam, 9th century A.D., Indonesia.





FIG. 6. Śiva showing his liṅga form by nāṭyahasta from the central shrine, Chaṇḍī Prāmbaṇam.



FIG. 7. Śiva showing his liṅga form by nāṭyahasta, from Museum, Leiden.

Indian delineation of it in the various great temples of South India, particularly the *gopurams* of Chidambaram.

The main figure in the central shrine of Śiva is an exquisite one, and unlike the seated figure of Śiva, as normally represented in Java, is not only a standing one on a *yoni*, but almost against a flattened Śivaliṅga, running the whole length of the figure itself. There is in addition the elongated halo of the Vākāṭaka-Chālukyan tradition, usual in Java.

Here the most noteworthy feature is Śiva explaining himself by *abhinaya*, without dancing. He is shown almost in the *samanakha* attitude, as one enters the stage. His *jaṭās*, most beautifully arranged, are both tied up on his head in *makuṭa* fashion, and allowed to dangle on his shoulders and back. These *jaṭās* are fashioned in the peculiar manner that is characteristic of the *jaṭās* of Naṭarāja in Ceylon, at the same time approaching the Choḷa idiom at the commencement of dance, as in the Melaperumballam Naṭarāja. There are two strands of *jaṭās* hanging on the shoulders and more of them, as we can see on the back. The peculiar twirl and the flowerlike decoration towards the end of the *jaṭās*, as it appears in Choḷa sculptures in metal, can also

be seen here. The *yajñopavīta* is composed of the snake, with a knot beautifully prepared on the chest to the left near the shoulder, exactly where the double-bell clasp is arranged in Pallava sculpture in South India. The skull on the head, the crescent moon, the eight flowers (*aṣṭa puṣhpikā*), are all shown here as a complete *āhārya*. It is not the *dhattūra* flower alone, as in South India, but a whole series. In this, we can see some resemblance in the arrangement of a number of flowers on the *jaṭās* in the Naṭarāja from Taṇḍantotṭam. The eye on the forehead is the most graceful representation. Here there is almost the Ardhanārīśvara aspect suggested by its being half open and half closed, though the ear ornaments, both uniform, fail to suggest it. The *akṣhamālā* and the *chaurī*, special attributes of Śiva in Indonesia, are present. Śiva wears the tiger skin, which is shown dangling on his knee, above the silken garment he is shown wearing as the *āntariya*. But the most interesting delineation here is the disposition of the main pair of arms. The left hand is in *ardha-chandra*, while the right is in *patāka*, probably in the process of its transformation into *śikhara* (Fig. 6). To better understand this, a similar image of Śiva from Chaṇḍikīḍal has to be viewed (Fig. 7). Here the right hand is clearly in *śikhara*. According to the *Nāṭya-*



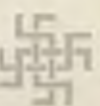
FIG. 8. Painting showing Śiva dancing, 13th century A.D., from Bali, Übersee Museum, Bremen.

śāstra, the gesticulation through a *samyuta hasta* like this indicates Śivaliṅga. In fact, it is known as *Śivaliṅga* and its usage is Śiva liṅga. It is as much as to suggest that this is a symbol of Śiva which he represents in physical form. This *abhinaya* is more eloquent than any dance posture itself. The *karaṇas* in dance, as already observed, are shown all around the temple in several panels. Śiva himself dancing is seen in the beautiful carving of Bhairava from Singasāri. This four-armed Bhairava is in the Leiden Museum. Death is personified in this and it is the dance after the deluge. His dog is shown behind him. He dances on a cluster of skulls, and the garland he wears, his ear ornaments, and the garland wound around his head, are all composed of skulls. His attributes are the *triśūla* (trident), drum, dagger and the skullcap. His eyes are large and circular. His loud laughter (*aṭṭa-hāsa*) is evident in the prominence given to the teeth. He is shown dancing with his legs bent and slightly apart as in *maṇḍala*. This at once reminds us of similar Bhairava, but in this case, Mārtāṇḍa Bhairava from the temple at Koṇārak, also dancing on a boat. Yet another dance figure of Śiva though of very late date, is *chatuḥ kāya* Śiva in his four-fold form, also dancing. This is from Ped jeng, Bali.

There is another very interesting beautiful bronze in the Leiden Museum, dancing on a lotus, almost simulating a seated position, with the right hand in *sūcī* and the left in *ardha-chandra*. This is as much as to indicate *vidyā* or Sarasvatī. As the figure is shown wearing a *nāga yajñopavīta*, with the clasp as a knot, with the gem-decked hood of the snake clearly seen, this should be understood as either Śiva or Skanda illustrating the great science of *nāṭya*. As the *hastas* illustrate Sarasvatī and learning, and the position is indicative of dance, and the tradition is clear that Skanda was also a great teacher of dance, it may be either Śiva or Skanda as a teacher, the teacher of dance. This miniature bronze in the Leiden Museum is certainly not Kāma, an identification about which Dr. Barnet Kempers and others are not themselves very happy.

Bali

The small island of Bali, almost an integral part of Java, is one of the most interesting spots for study of Indian culture that has travelled overseas. Professor Sylvain Levi's Sanskrit Texts of Bali clearly reveal how the hymns of the *Vedas* and the verses from the *Purāṇas*, the latter closely following the southern version of the *Mahābhārata*, have been preserved for ages,



almost zealously guarded, in spite of textual corruption, inevitable after the lapse of centuries and lack of contact with the Indian mainland. The dances of Bali and Indonesia recall the Indian tradition of Bharata. It cannot be that there are no traces of the Supreme Dancer who is the fountain of dance itself as conceived in India. As the monuments in Bali that have survived, continue the tradition of Indonesia, particularly the eastern part of Java, we should expect to find close similarity between art expression in Bali and Java and in any medium, sculpture or painting, and the form of the shadow play figures of Wayang. It is the same story as in Kerala, where the Kathakali type of dress and decoration and contour of figure is found in the 17th-18th century paintings of the temples and palaces like those at Trichūr, Trivaṅjikuḷam, Padmanābhapuram, etc.

Three fragments of paintings composing a major part of one complete larger picture, now preserved in the Ubersee Museum in Bremen, West Germany, represent the theme of the dance of Śiva and the gods witnessing it. Number 3 shows four-armed Śiva dancing on a circular lotus pedestal (Fig. 8). His *jaṭās* are bound up in a large mass, *jaṭā-bhāra*. He is four-armed and the third eye is prominent on the forehead. Number 2 illustrates some of the *dik-pālas* watching the dance, including Yama and Nirṛiti, both carrying clubs and rather fearful in their aspects. In fragment number 1, there is Viṣṇu on Garuḍa very prominent. This is most important for a study of the theme of Naṭarāja as it shows how the spirit of *Pradośhastava*, where all the gods are in attendance as Śiva dances, *sevante tam anu pradoshasamaye devam mṛḍānīpatim*, is clearly represented in a very late painting, showing how well an idea has been preserved for several centuries in spite of loss of all contacts between India and this far-off island.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, there is a strong tradition of the adoration of Śiva as Nṛiteśvara. This is clearly seen in the mention in inscriptions of images of Śiva prepared for worship and actual surviving examples in stone and metal. The strong predilection for Śiva worship and study of Śivāgama and Śaiva literature is abundantly revealed in the wealth of inscriptions from Cambodia. In the mode of thought, as in *stotras* like *śive bhaktis śive bhaktis śive bhakir bhave bhave* and in tune with Pallava inscrip-

tions, like *dhik teshām dhik teshām dhik dhik teshām dhik astu dhik teshām yeshām na vasati hṛidaye kupathavimokshako rudrah*, the Sambor Prei Kuk inscription of Īśānavarman (627 A.D.) mentions Vidyāviśeṣha as establishing a Śivaliṅga for assuring himself of devotion to Śiva in all future births, *ichchhatā bhaktim īśāne sthirām janmani janmani*. Indravarman's Prah Ko inscription (879 A.D.) mentions how devoted is the king to Śiva, and to whose mind Kāma can only have an occasional approach, as the moon-crested Lord is ever enshrined there, *adhyāste yasya hṛdayam naiva kāmo niran-taram tatsannihitachandrārddhachūdāmaṇibhayād iva*. In the Prasat Sankhah inscription of Sūryavarman I (11th century) there is a mention of the learning of Devavāgīśvara Paṇḍita in Śaivāgama and lore, *śaivetihāsādhyaapurāṇa-kāvyaśāstrāṇyanekānyakalaṅkabuddhiḥ neśśesham uktvā*. Another Śaiva scholar is a Śivāchārya as the *rājaguru* in the Vat Thipedi inscription of Sūryavarman. Worship according to Śaiva Āgama, Śruti and Smṛiti is also mentioned in the Mebon inscription of Rājendravarman (952 A.D.), *sa kalpayāmāsa mahendrakalpas śai-vaśrūtismṛityuditām saparyām*.

Like Mahendravarman Pallava, who was himself a sculptor and lover of art, kings of Cambodia could themselves, as sculptors, fashion images as gathered from inscriptions. This, coupled with their intense faith and aesthetic outlook, accounts for iconographic wealth in their kingdom. King Indravarman of Prah Ko inscription (879 A.D.) consecrated three images, Śiva, Umā and Gaṅgā, examples of his own skill in art, *pratimās svaśilparachitā īśasya devyoścha tāḥ tisras sthāpitavān*. The ruler Yaśovarman of Loley inscription (899 A.D.), similarly proclaims four images prepared by himself, *imās svaśilparachitā gurūṇām puṇyavṛiddhaye chatasras śivaśarvāṇīpratimās sthāpitās samam*.

In this state of enthusiastic faith in Śiva worship Śaiva iconographic concepts could easily find abundant expression. And there are several such like Āliṅgana-Chandraśekhara, Umāmaheśvara, Umāśahita-Vṛishabhavāhana, Rāvaṇānugraha, Tripurāntaka, Madanāntaka and so forth. There are also interesting instances from *Śivapurāṇa* the story of Umā's penance to win Śiva as her spouse, the theme of Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*. The dance of Śiva should therefore be expected as an important theme in this series. It is found not only as one of the themes ex-

pressed here, but is a favourite one, as it is repeated several times.

In Īśānavarman's Sambor Prei Kuk inscription, there is a mention of the installation of a silver image of Nṛiṭteśvara and Nandi. The Lord of dancers is styled Nāṭakeśvara with ten arms, *daśabhujā*, a golden image, as described in the eleventh century Prasant Ta Keo inscription of Sūryavarman. The popularity of Śiva's dance is evident in the invocation of dancing Śiva, *śrīmatpādāgralīlāvanamitadharanīkshobhasamkshobhitastham bhrāmyatkrandatsurendram bhujabalapavanais samskhalatsadvimānaiḥ svāṅgaissvalpīkṛitāśam navarasaruchibhir visphuradrāmamālyair nāṭyam brahmādisevyam sukhayatu dayitānandanam chandramauleḥ* in the Prah Khan inscription of Sūryavarman I. These are *utsava mūrtis* in metal and a similar one is found in the collection of the Musée Blanchard de la Brosse now called National Museum of Vietnam at Saigon. L. Mallerat has presented a bronze of Śiva Nāṭarāja in plate 30. He is four-armed and dances in *ardhaparyāṅka*. There is also a bronze of Umā standing. Kamaleswar Bhattacharya has given a very interesting account of Śaiva images in his book *Les religions Brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge*.

In Cambodia, at Banteai Srei, the façade of the east *gopura* of the charming temple complex, which is among the daintiest in this area representing Khmer art, shows an interesting panel of dancing Śiva, in a large ornamental arch, resembling the *kūḍus* of South India (Fig. 9). Śiva as Nāṭarāja, multi-armed, is dancing. To his left, there is a drummer playing a pair of *ūrdhva* type of drum and to his right is seated the emaciated devotee Kāraikālammai-yār (Fig. 10), so famous in Tamil devotional literature. Mireille Benisti has not only described this representation but also other similar sculptural versions of this singularly devoted attendant of dancing Śiva found scattered elsewhere in this area and brought and preserved in the Museum of Phnom Penh and elsewhere.

She has elaborately discussed the place of Kāraikālammai-yār in history and legend, while interpreting another interesting lintel of Vat Baset, where a very beautiful 11th century carving of ten-armed Śiva dancing in *chatura* is represented. This Nāṭarāja form is flanked by a beautiful young damsel and an emaciated ugly looking woman. Here again, it is Umā

seated to the right and Kāraikālammai-yār to the left.

As the name itself signifies, Kāraikālammai-yār is called after the place of her origin, Kāraikāl in South India. Though she is very well known in Śaivite lore in South India far beyond her birth place Kāraikāl, it is amazing to find her representation in a place so far off as Cambodia and repeated so often in exactly the same way as she is known in the homeland.

There are bronzes also representing Kāraikālammai-yār in close association with Nāṭarāja, along with *bhūtagaṇas* depicted at the feet of the great dancer. She has been always represented in so emaciated a form that either she is mistaken to be a female parallel of Bhṛīṅgi or Chāmuṇḍā, Kṛīṣodarī or even Kālī. This last mistake could never arise as where Kālī is shown competing with Śiva and associated with him in his dance, she is separately included in the group which includes Kāraikālammai-yār, as at Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram. She is shown in relief against the wall in the niche, which is near the feet of Nāṭeśa behind him. Kāraikālammai-yār is also here portrayed, along with the Gaṇas, in the frieze below the niche.

The reason for Kāraikālammai-yār being shown so emaciated is elucidated in a story associated with her. She was the daughter of a rich merchant of Kāraikāl named Dhanadatta and was called Punitavatī. From her childhood, she was devoted to Śiva. When she grew up to be a maiden and was wedded to Paramadatta, she lived happily and was a model of a wife. One day Paramadatta was offered two rare mangoes which he sent home to his wife. In the meantime arrived a hungry Śaivite mendicant at her door whom she heartily welcomed, fed and gave a mango. On the arrival of her husband, she gave him the remaining one which tasted so delicious that he asked for the other also. Embarrassed and unable to give him the fruit, nor even to narrate to him her helplessness, she prayed to God, and miraculously a fruit of divine taste appeared in her hand, which she offered her husband. He felt the taste so different and so overwhelming that he queried and learnt how it was obtained. In wonder, the husband asked her for another. She repeated her prayer and offered him another fruit which she obtained with divine aid. As Paramadatta received it, the fruit suddenly disappeared. This time the husband of Punitavatī was embarrassed. Having felt himself unworthy of

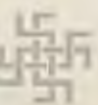




FIG. 9. Śiva dancing with Kāraikālammaiṃ on one side, Śrīvijaya, 9th century A.D., Banteai Srei.

so divine a damsel and mentally elevating her to almost divine respect and sanctity he could not consider her his wife any more. Setting sail again in his pursuit of trade, he reached a distant seaport where he settled down after marrying another maiden there. With his deep respect for his first wife, he named a daughter born to him Punitavati after her.

When Punitavati learnt, in course of time, that her husband was settled in the Pāṇḍyan realm, she eagerly journeyed to reach him. Appraised of her arrival, Paramadatta reverently approached her with his family. When asked by his relatives about his propriety in bowing to his wife, Paramadatta explained how she was divine in his eyes and was always an object of worship for him. This so disappointed Punitavati, that she immediately prayed to God that she should be shorn of her beauty and charm, which she had hitherto welcomed only to gladden her husband, and which henceforth was of no use to her, and desired to be made a fearful and emaciated hag. Her only interest in life thenceforth was adoration of Śiva, singing his praise and sounding the cymbals for music and prayer. She grew so old in this service of God that she was always addressed by everyone as Ammaiṃ, the mother. The story



FIG. 10. Close up of Kāraikālammaiṃ, Śrīvijaya, 9th century A.D., Banteai Srei.

goes that she approached Śiva in Kailāsa and was welcomed by him, addressed even by the Lord as Ammaiyār. Her request to gaze at the dancing Lord and enjoy the perfection of his art was assured to her by Śiva at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu. She is always represented in sculpture seated in the vicinity of dancing Śiva, keeping time along with the Gaṇas. This devotee of Śiva, like the famous four, Tirunāvukkaraṣu, or Appar, as he was popularly called, Jñānasambanda, Māṇikkavāchaka and Sundara, and a few more devotees like Kaṇṇappa and Nandanār, is known only locally and not very far beyond the confines of the south. She is a historical personage, who lived in the sixth century A.D. and composed several Śaivite hymns of great charm and devotion. Her life has been narrated by Śekkiḷār, the Prime Minister of the Choḷa emperor Anapāya, in the 12th century A.D., in his important book *Periappurāṇam*. Her story which finds an important place in the work of Śekkiḷār was already so very well known that several representations of Kāraikālammaiṃyār of earlier date exist in South India. It is indeed interesting to find representations of Kāraikālammaiṃyār repeated several times in the monuments of Cambodia, wherever Śiva's dance is delineated.

Bruno Dagens, in his interesting paper on the iconography of the epoch of Sūryavarman, draws attention to a fragment of sculpture of

Śiva dancing from the eastern façade of a *maṇḍapa* from Vat Ek. Śiva ten-armed, either in the *lalita* or *chatura* pose, is shown dancing. As it is only a fragment, the exact position of the feet is not clear, nor are the attendant figures, like Gaṇas, Kāraikālammaiṃyār and others, usually associated with Naṭeśa, present. The façade of the eastern *gopura* from Phnom Chisor shows Śiva dancing as Viṇādhara with only a single pair of arms. He carries a *viṇā*, across his chest, which he plays with both his hands as he dances in the *lalita* pose. Kāraikālammaiṃyār, as an emaciated old woman, is seated to his right, sounding the cymbals. To his left is a drummer and Brahmā also, four-faced, keeps time (Fig. 11).

On another façade, that of the southern *maṇḍapa* from Baset, there is Śiva ten-armed dancing this time in *chatura*, carrying the *viṇā* as Viṇādhara, against a background of the hide of an elephant, combining the Gajāntaka form also, the main stress being on the dance. Kāraikālammaiṃyār is shown to the right and a Gaṇa as well as Viṣṇu to the left to keep time (Fig. 12).

It is again very interesting that at Phnom Chisor the central entrance of the pavilion has an arched lintel on top with the carving of Śeṣhaśāyi Viṣṇu. The association of Śeṣhaśāyi Viṣṇu with Naṭarāja in the same place cannot



FIG. 11. Śiva dancing *viṇā* in hand, 9th century A.D., Phnom Chisor, Cambodia.

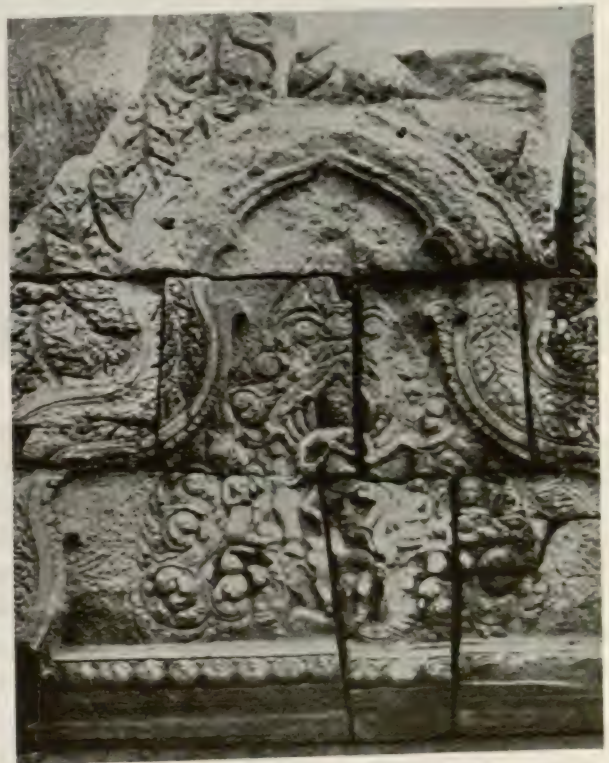


FIG. 12. Śiva dancing as Gajāntaka, Śrīvijaya, 9th century A.D., from Baset, Cambodia.



FIG. 13. Śiva dancing vīṇā in hand with Kāraikālammaiṇār to left, Baset, 9th century A.D., Cambodia.

but recall the proximity of both these at Chidambaram, based on the tradition of the representation of Śiva and Viṣṇu together, as even in the shore temple at Mahābalipuram. It should be recalled that Śiva and Viṣṇu are so closely associated in the early medieval period that Harihara becomes a great favourite in Cambodia and inscriptions mention the erection of temples and the establishment of this composite form in them. The presence of Viṣṇu, as the accompanist of the musical orchestra, cannot but bring to one's mind the concept of *Pradoshastava* where Viṣṇu sounds the *mṛdaṅga*, Brahmā keeps time, Indra plays the flute and other Gaṇas engage themselves, each, individually, to swell the orchestra, as Sarasvatī herself plays the harp.

A lintel from Prah Pithu presents Śiva dancing between Brahmā and Viṣṇu (Fig. 14). The two deities keep time as Śiva, ten-armed, dances. The stance for the dancer is *ūrdhvajānu*. There are other musical figures interspersed in the decorative pattern of foliage and mythical animals, *kīrtimukha* and so forth. Gaṇeśa is one of the spectators of the dance. The description of *Pradoshastava*, where Viṣṇu and Brahmā give musical accompaniment, as the other devas watch with wonder the majestic movement of the divine dancer, is all answered here, *sevante tam anu pradoshasamayē devam mṛdānīpatim*. Kamaleswar Bhattacharya has not only depicted this, but has also mentioned

another representation of Śiva's dance at Ben Mala where he is flanked by Umā and Gaṇeśa.

At Banteai Samri is another figure of Śiva dancing on a platform, held by some caryatids like *asuras*, an interesting feature from Cambodia.

As in the Prasat Takeo inscription of Sūryavarman, there is again the mention of a golden image of Śikharīśvara, a dance form of Śiva made of gold, consecrated by Divākarapaṇḍita, the royal priest of the time of Sūryavarman II (1113 A.D.). As given in the inscription of Phnom Sandak and Preah Vihear, Śiva is shown dancing between Brahmā and Viṣṇu in a sculpture in relief from the Bayon. The flanking figures are in an attitude of adoration. Though the *Āgama* texts do not describe Brahmā and Viṣṇu flanking Śiva as the supreme dancer, we know that in the Liṅgodbhava form, they both stand as adorers. Even in the case of the dancing form of Śiva, they form the musical accompaniment and are always in a worshipful attitude. The Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram has a sculpture of Śiva in *lalāṭatilaka* dance pose flanked by adoring Brahmā and Viṣṇu. It is the form of adorer here for both and they are not the accompanists for dance as found at the Bayon. This carving falls in line with the similar representation from the lintel at Pra Pithiu where also ten-armed Śiva dances between Brahmā and



FIG. 14. Lintel showing *Natarāja* dancing between *Brahmā* and *Vishṇu*, 9th century A.D., *Prah Pithu*, Cambodia.



FIG. 15. *Śiva* dancing in the company of *Gaṇeśa* and *Umā*, *Śrīvijaya*, 9th century A.D., *Banteai Samre*, Cambodia.

Vishṇu. The bronze image of *Śiva* sounding small cymbals described by Prof. Coedes is undoubtedly part of a larger group where there must have been a central figure of *Śiva* dancing with *Vishṇu* on the other side playing the drum or sounding the cymbals.

Prof. Coedes has described two other dancing figures of *Śiva*, one from Angkor Vat and the other from Beng Mealea. At Angkor Vat, it is

an elaborate carving of *Natarāja* accompanied by *Brahmā*, *Vishṇu*, *Gaṇeśa* and other celestials, like *apsaras*, *kinnaras*, *nāgas*, *garuḍa* all joining his dance in great glea. This sculpture, though a small medallion, has a wealth of detail and intricate workmanship proving the excellence of the sculptor's art.

At Beng Mealea again it is the dance of *Śiva* amidst *Brahmā*, *Gaṇeśa* and *Vishṇu*. *Brahmā*

joins in the accompaniment to the dance of Śiva as at Angkor Vat. In this we are at once reminded of the dance of Brahmā and Viṣṇu as comrades in the art, so beautifully represented in the 12th century lintel carving from Wāraṅgal, one of the finest examples of Kākātīya art from their capital.

Another sculpture at Beng Mealea described by Prof. Coedes is a representation of Śiva dancing between Umā and Gaṇeśa. Mr. Bhattacharya has pointed out the possibility of its answering the description of one or the other of the seven *tāṇḍavas* of Śiva mentioned in the *Āgamas*, the *Umātāṇḍava* or *Gaurītāṇḍava*. *Tripuratāṇḍava* is the dance of Śiva between Gaurī and Skanda.

Though there is no representation of Śiva dancing between Umā and Gaṇeśa as a special form found in India, at Banteai Samre, there is an exquisite representation of Śiva, with two arms, dancing along with Devī and Gaṇeśa (Fig. 15). There are three musicians forming the orchestra, sounding the cymbals, blowing the bugle and playing the drum. There are other celestial figures, like Vidyādhara, fluttering above and two ṛishis seated as spectators. Can it be that they are Taṇḍu and Bharata? The *jaṭāmakuṭa* of Śiva is very peculiarly represented. The *jaṭā* is itself bound up like an *amṛitaghāṭa* or the *pūrṇaghāṭa* with the ends of the *jaṭās* flowing out from it, giving it the appearance of Gaṅgā as a *pūrṇakumbha* or *kalaśa* held up on his head. This is a very peculiar representation worthy of the production of the genius of the Cambodian sculptor.

Prof. Finot has drawn attention to another dancing Śiva at Phnom Thbong. In this, the dancing figure has ten arms. Prof. H. Parmentier mentions the huge but unfortunately mutilated image of Śiva dancing, found at Prasant Kraham with five heads and ten arms.

Prof. Coedes has described several bronzes of Śiva dancing of which one partially corresponds to *Kālikātāṇḍava*, where the deity should have two eyes and not three, eight arms holding trident, noose, drum, skull and fire pot, while the remaining two hands are in *abhaya* and *gajahasta*. However, Malleret identifies the four-armed bronze from the Saigon museum as the *Kālikātāṇḍava* form.

It is very interesting how there is a combination in Cambodia of several northern and

southern elements in the representation of Naṭarāja. First, it may be noted that Śiva has multiple arms, ten or twelve, a common feature in north Indian sculptures, particularly in the form of Nartēśvara, as he is also known in Bengal. The *Viṣṇudharmottara* also calls him Nartēśvara. The *Matsyapurāṇa* has a description which exactly answers the famous Naṭarāja from Śaṅkarabandha in the Dacca Museum, the typical Bengal type, as well as the ten-armed type found in Cambodia. However, the major difference between the Naṭarāja from Bengal and from the south is that he dances on the bull in Bengal and on the dwarf Apasmāra in South India. In Cambodia, he dances neither on the malignant dwarf nor on Nandi.

However, at Champa in a carving from Mison, Śiva is shown dancing in *chatura* on an Apasmāra and on a pedestal with Nandi shown on it. At Thu Bon and at Po Nagar similarly, Śiva dances on Nandi. All these have been described and discussed by H. Parmentier. As pointed out by L. Fournereau, the *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Śiva is almost completely represented in a carving from Siam. It is thus very evident there is a fusion of influence both from north-east India and the south in the area of Cambodia, Champa. It is amazing to find the number of dancing figures of Śiva found in different places like Bich La, Phong Le, Tra kieu, Thu Bon and Po Nagar de Nha-trang. Śiva has six arms at Pong Le, ten arms at Bich La, while in the rest of the places above, he has only four arms. Even here again, it is the preference of one or the other of the popular type from the south with four arms, or six arms from the Deccan and Chālukyan area or the ten arms from Orissa and Bengal.

The number of carvings showing Apsaras dancing in rows in the vicinity of Śiva at Banteai Srei, at Bayon and in a frieze at Angkor Vat, are all to emphasise the dance of celestial nymphs in accompaniment, for which there are references in the Tamil hymns on Śiva's dance, *nāṭṭiyapēṅgal āḍa*. Kamlesh Bhattacharya has actually described a dancing Apsara and accompanying musicians sounding the cymbals. A swan flying above, shown on both sides, is probably Brahmā and Sarasvatī symbolised as the patrons of dance, appreciating the art of the nymphs; maybe it is not an Apsaras, but Devī herself dancing, which alone can evoke such fine appreciation from Brahmā and Sarasvatī. This is not a mere conjecture, as we know that this is the way Brahmā is

represented when he appreciates the superiority of a great deity, as in the case of Śiva Liṅgodbhava, where soaring above on one side is Brahmā as a swan and burrowing below on the other is Viṣṇu in his form as Varāha.

Champā

Ancient Champā along the entire coastal region of Indo-China had, like Cambodia, Malaya and Indonesia, close touch with India. In the second century A.D. itself, the Vo-Chank rock inscription (No. 1) mentions the royal family of Śrīmāra. To the 5th century belong inscriptions mentioning Dharmamahārāja Śrī Bhadravarman, a scholar well versed in the four *Vedas*, who created a temple for Śiva named after Bhadreśvarasvāmī at Mi-son which became the most famous in Champā. The close touch and the great religious faith in the sacred spots, rivers and mountains of India can be seen in the instance of a king Gaṅgarāja, who abdicated his throne and retired to India to spend his last days on the sacred river Gaṅgā. A family of Gaṅgarāja became a Brahma-Kshatra family and there are several rulers like Rudravarman, Praśastadharma, alias Śambhuvarman, Kandarpadharma, Prabhāsadharma and others. The temple of Bhadreśvarasvāmī, built by Bhadravarman which was destroyed by fire during the time of Rudravarman in the 6th century, was rebuilt by Śambhuvarman and the image was named Śambhu-Bhadreśvara. In the 7th

century, a son of a Cambodian princess, Prakāśadharma, also called Vikrāntavarma, liberally endowed deities named after his paternal and maternal grandfathers, the latter from Cambodia, as Śambhubhadreśvara and Īśāneśvara. An inscription of the 9th century mentions Śrī Jaya Indravarman Mahārājādhirāja, of the family of Bhṛigu, sent to Champā by Lord Śiva Mahādeva himself, and a great devotee of Śiva, whose temples he endowed. Among the kings who succeeded him, Indravarman III is known not only for his liberality, but also for his accomplishments, particularly his knowledge of *Mīmāṃsā* and other systems of philosophy, including the Buddhist, the epics and Śaiva āgamas and Pāṇini's grammar as expounded in the *Kāśikā*. In the 10th century, king Paramēśvaravarman devoted himself to the restoration of several temples and richly endowed them, especially the temple of Śrī Śrīśānabhadreśvara.

In the Mi-son stela inscription of Prakāśadharma dated in 657 A.D. the significance of the dance of Śiva is graphically portrayed. Śiva who is the one lord of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and all the other gods, demons, Brahmaṛishis and Rājāṛishis dances in the crematorium for the welfare of the universe. He assumes the forms equal to his energy like earth, ether and so forth for his activity to sustain the world. From this is evolved the universe, both static and dynamic, like rays from the sun. How

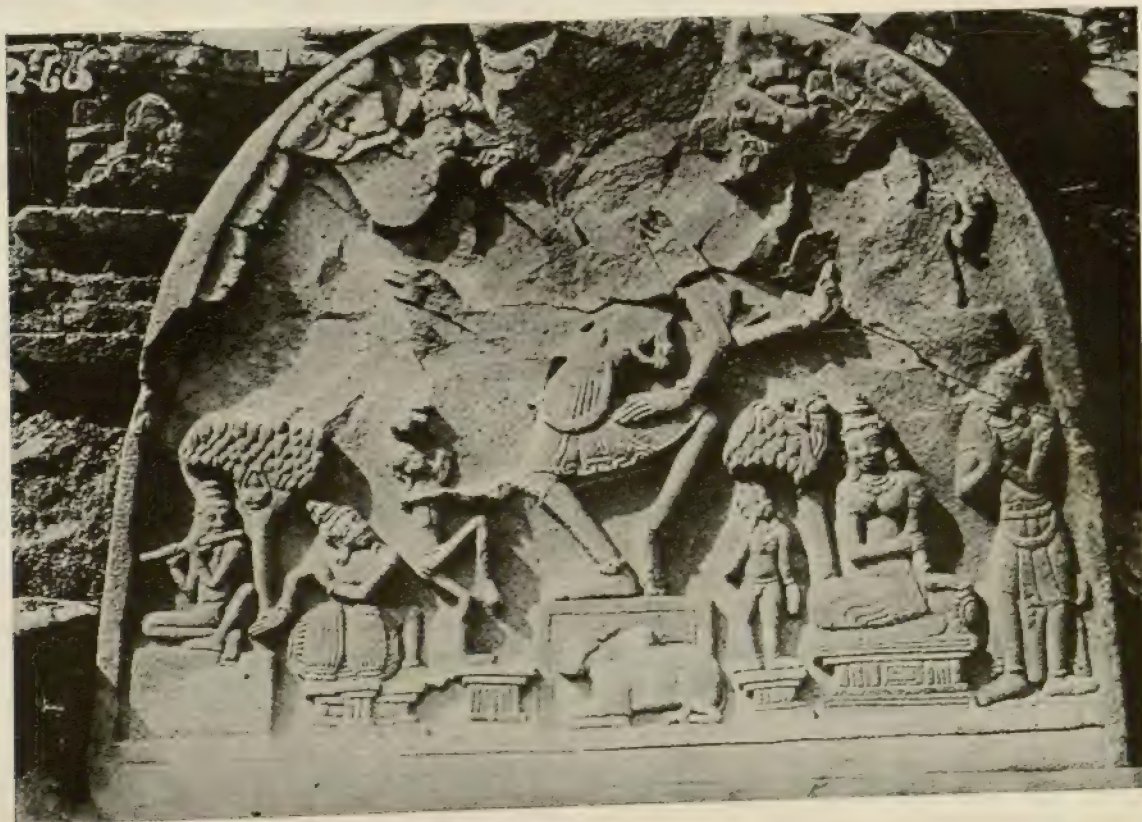
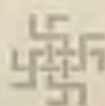


FIG. 16. Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, 8th century A.D., Mi-son, AI.



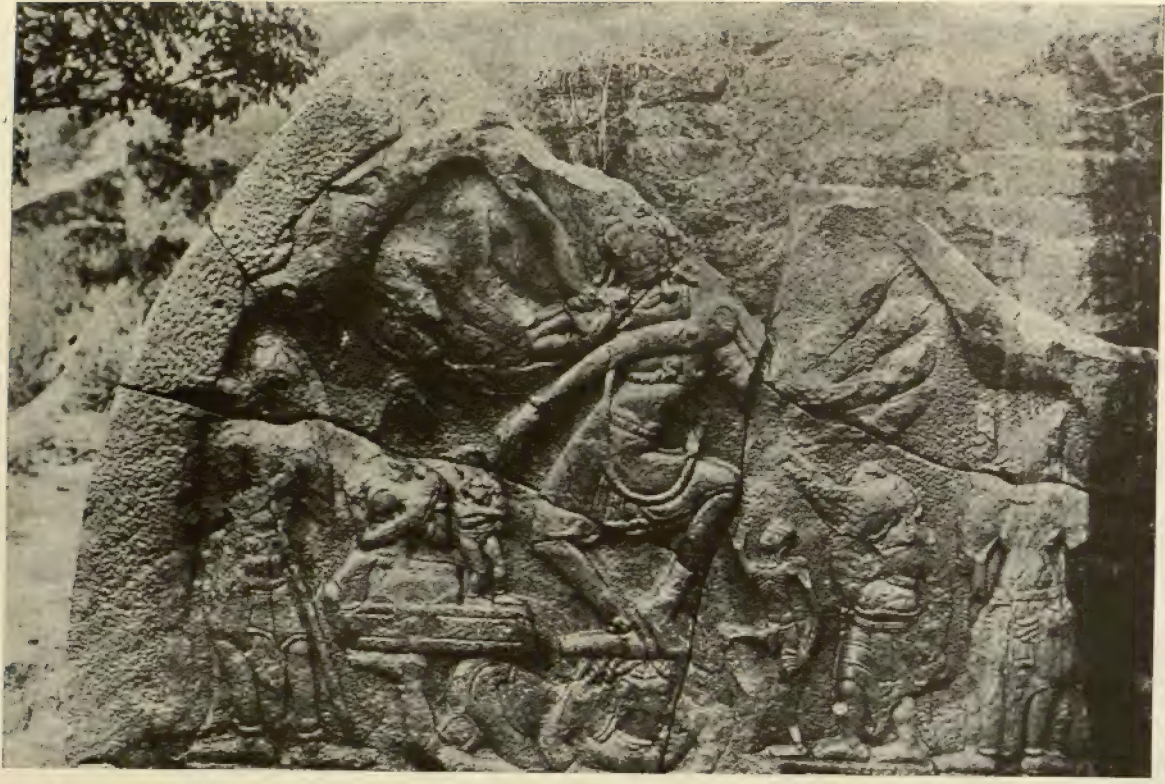


FIG. 17. Śiva dancing on Apasmāra, 8th century A.D., Mi-son, CI.

wonderful his creation ! Though free from desires he is the cause of creation. Even thought centred on him gives bliss, not to speak of his manifestation itself. *svam śaktiḥ pratiyogyatām upagatā kshityādayo mūrtayo lokasthityudayādikāryaparatā tābhīr vinā nāsti hi ityevam vigaṇayya śaktivaśināyenādhiyantetha vā kā nāmeha vibhūḥ kriyā na bhajate yā syuḥ parārthodaye || yo brahmā-viṣṇu tridaśādhipādīsurāsurabrahmanṛparshimānyaḥ tathāpi bhūtyai jagatāmanṛityachchhmasānabhūmāvati chitrametad ||* He is here invoked as Prabhāseśvara of Champā. It is most interesting that two of the finest images of dancing Śiva are from Mi-son.

The inscriptions of Champā, like those from Cambodia, reveal a great contact with South India, particularly the famous temples of the Pallava-Chōḷa area and their local legends. Mi-son with its special stress on the Natarāja form of Śiva also supplies in the seventh century stela inscription of Vishantavarma I, the clue to the special predilection for the dancing deity. The verse, *ichchhātītavarapradānavaśinam bhaktyā samāradhya yam trailokyaprabhavaḥ prabhāva-mahatā vṛitrasya hantrā vinā bhunktedyāpyupamanyur indudhavalam kshirārṇavam bāndhavais śrīśāneśvaranātha esha bhagavān pāyad apāyat sa vaḥ*, clearly refers to the legend of the little boy Upamanyu, son of Vyāghrapāda, who, fed on the milk of the heavenly cow Surabhi in the hermitage of his maternal uncle Vasiṣṭha, cried for the same

when brought to the home of his father, when the dancing lord of Tillavana (Chidambaram) created an ocean of milk to satisfy the child. This incident is narrated in the *Naṭeśavijaya* of Venkaṭakrishṇa Dīkshita, a contemporary of Rāmabhadra Dīkshita at the court of Shāhājī I of Tanjāvūr in the 17th century: *mugdham vanyāhāravairasyayogad dugdham smāram smāram enam rudantam ārānṇityam vīkshya pītṛā harosmai kshirābḍhim drāḡ ānayad dīnabandhuḥ* (*Naṭeśavijaya* 2.64). Other parallels with the origins of the Pallava royal family, like that of Bhadravarman of Champā in the Mi-son stela inscription of Prakāśadharma of the 7th century mentioning the marriage of Kaundinya, the disciple of Aśvatthāmā, with the Nāga princess Somā to establish a royal line, other names of deity like Mahālīṅga, and the naming of deity after a king like Bhadreśvara after Bhadravarman or Īśāneśvara, after Īśānavarman, place names like Pāṇḍuraṅgapura, etc. and royal races like Gaṅgarāja, point to Pallava and Chāḷukyan influences from South India.

This atmosphere of patronage of culture and learning, and devotion to faith, accounts for the erection of several temples and the recording of inscriptions which give the history of the dynasties that ruled in this area, their exploits and donations. It is interesting to find that the sculptural wealth has its own story to tell of the



FIG. 18. Śiva dancing, sixteen-armed, 9th century A.D., Phong Le.

FIG. 19. Krishna dancing as Govardhanoddhāra, Khurong-my, 8th century A.D., Cham Museum, Danang.

iconographic forms of deity closely related to their Indian prototypes. On the tympanum of Mi-son C-I, there is a representation of twelve-armed Śiva dancing in the *chatura* pose on a pedestal, with the Nandi bull seated against it (Fig. 16). Unfortunately, the upper part of the figure is mutilated and lost. There are fluttering devas above, shown in adoration of the dancing deity. To his left, there are traces of a deity which may have been Viṣṇu, four armed, playing the drum; the corresponding figure to the right is almost completely lost. To the right of Śiva there is Bhṛṅgiriṭi, skeleton-like, dancing in ecstasy. Next to him is seated Vaiśravaṇa, playing the *ūrdhva* drum. Still farther, Indra is seated under a tree playing the flute. This and the other tree to the left of Śiva, indicate that Śiva is dancing in a grove in the open. Baby Skanda is standing admiring the dance of his father, following the example of his mother Pārvatī, seated on a *bhadrapīṭha* resting her left hand on a cushion. To the extreme left, there is a devotee standing with hands in adoration. This image very closely resembles Śiva dancing in *chatura* from Bādāmī.

There is another similar example at Mi-son, A.I, of Śiva dancing (Fig. 17). Though the carving is worn, the number of arms and the face of the deity as well as other portions, missing in the previous example, can be made out here to an extent. Devī and Skanda are seated to the right of the dancing deity, the former with her hands clasped in adoration and the latter with arms folded in great respect. In this case, Śiva dances on Apasmāra, recalling South Indian figures of that type. The dance, however, is



chatura. Bhṛṅgiriṭi, skeleton-like, dances ecstatically to the left of the deity. Beyond him is Gaṇeśa appreciating his father's dance, waving his right hand. A standing royal figure, with hands clasped in devotion, as in the previous example, is here shown to the extreme right of dancing Śiva. Another figure, probably Indra, is carved at the extreme left. The right hand of Śiva in this case is in *śimhakarṇa* where the thumb and the pointing finger coming together suggest Śiva as giving an exposition of dance as a science to be taught. It is very interesting to see that in both these, the southern tradition, both Chālukyan and Pallava are combined, Devī, with her left hand resting on the seat, recalling similar seated figures of her in Pallava sculptures, Skanda with his mother watching Śiva's dance, usually, and sometimes with Gaṇeśa as well, a feature in South Indian representations, which tradition survives even in late paintings of Śiva *tāṇḍava* from Kerala. The presence of Apasmāra under the feet of Śiva is very significant. This is found all over South



FIG. 20. Twenty-armed Śiva dancing with *vīṇā* on bull Nandi, 8th century A.D., Cham Museum, Danang.

India. Its occurrence at Paṭṭadakal is particularly noteworthy. The numerous arms shown here form a feature which is noticed in Chālukyan sculptures where the description of *bhujataruvana* by Kālidāsa is completely answered. Jean Boisselier has drawn attention to the occurrence of Gaṇeśa at Bādāmī and Pārvatī and Skanda at Ellora. These two sculptures coming from Mi-son, the spot sanctified by the famous temple of Bhadreśvara, that all the time remained a great and sanctified institution in Champā, makes them doubly important.

In a tympanum from Phong Le, there is carved a very vigorous figure of dancing Śiva, sixteen-armed (Fig. 18). His musical orchestra is composed of a harpist, thrumming a *vīṇā* of the ancient harp type, and a drummer playing the *ūrdhva* type. There are other divine witnesses of the dance of Śiva. No attributes appear in the hands of Śiva, all of which, except two, in *patāka* signifying *abhaya*, are in the *mudrā* for *āchamana*. It probably suggests Śiva's dance of deluge which gulps up the

waters of *pralaya* to discharge them again in the process of creation, as water is created first—*apa eva sasarjāda*. This sculpture, now preserved in the Musée de Tourane, now called Cham Museum, Da Nang, is indeed very inspiring. It is interesting again to note that Kṛishṇa as Govardhanadhārī is shown practically in the same dance attitude holding up the mountain to protect the cows. This sculpture from Khuong-my is also preserved in the museum at Da Nang. It also shows that the tradition of representing Kṛishṇa in as much a dance attitude as Śiva himself is also a favourite theme in this area (Fig. 19).

There are other sculptures in the Cham Museum, showing Śiva dancing

FIG. 21. Twentyfour-armed Śiva dancing on huge bull, Nandi, 8th century, Khuong-my, Cham Museum, Danang.





FIG. 22. Four-armed Śiva dancing, 8th century A.D., Tra Kieu, Cham Museum, Danang.

on Nandi with the *viṇā* in his hand, combining the Viṇādhara and Naṭarāja concepts in one and exhibiting a feature which is peculiar to Bengal and Orissa, i.e. dance on his vehicle, the bull. On a tympanum from Khuong-my, Śiva is shown with twentyfour arms dancing on a huge bull, Devī standing to the left in front of the animal (Fig. 21). As usual in the case of Chālukyan bulls, Nandi has a large necklet of bells. Śiva has an artistic twist of the back and hips, and is almost shown like Gajasamharamūrti at Dārāsuram nearly forming a *pristhasvastika*. In two of his uplifted hands, he holds aloft a snake and two other arms are used for clapping above his head; the rest carry indistinct attributes. There is in the same Museum another sculpture closely resembling the one just described (Fig. 20). Here also Śiva carries the *viṇā*. One cannot but recall the famous Naṭarāja known as Nartasvara in Bengal from Śaṅkarabandha dancing on the back of Nandi. But with the twist of the body, which is usually found in the Chālukyan and Nolamba figures, there is here a happy combination of elements from areas like Karṇāṭa, Kalinga, Triliṅga and Vaṅga.

Yet another image on a tympanum from Trau-Kieu which is in the Cham Museum, Da Nang, is a lovely representation of Śiva's dance. Śiva, four armed, is dancing in the *lalita* pose, and is flanked by two dancing figures almost destroyed, probably intended for Gaṇeśa on the right and Skanda to the left (Fig. 22).



FIG. 23. Śiva dancing on seated bull, 8th century A.D., Thu bon.

One of his hands in the *alapallava* is suggestive of wonder. His eye travelling in the direction of the hand in *alapallava* suggests that he is conveying *bhāva* through his eyes which follow the movements very closely according to the dictum of Bharata (see p. 16).

Among the broken sculptures from Thu-bon, there is a remarkable one which, though mutilated, shows how beautiful should have been this dancing figure of multiarmed Śiva on a seated bull (Fig. 23). Here again Śiva is in *lalita* pose; the flexion of the body is very beautiful and the flying garments suggest the swing of his body. The seated bull with the dancer



FIG. 24. Six-armed Śiva dancing, 9th century A.D., Po Klaung, Gerai.

on his back recalls similar carvings from Orissa.

On the tympanum to the east of the principal sanctuary at Po Klaung, Gerai, occurs yet another lovely representation of Śiva dancing in the *lalita* pose (Fig. 24). He has six arms and carries attributes like the trident, axe, snake, and lotus. The topmost pair of hands is raised over his head for clapping.

On the tympanum of the principal sanctuary at Po Nagar de Nha-trang, dancing Śiva is repeated (Fig. 26), with his left leg on the back of the seated bull, which ecstatically looks up in admiration of his dance; Śiva's right leg rests on the ground almost as if he is descending from the back of his mount. The figure is four-armed. There is a grace about the flexion composing the dancing figure. This is described by Jean Boisselier as a representation of a four-armed goddess and not of Śiva as described by Parmentier earlier. But it appears to be probably Śiva or Ardhanārīśvara dancing, which would account for the almost feminine appearance including the elevation of the breast on one side. The attributes carried by the deity are *vajra*, lotus, *chakra*, the fourth hand being in the *sūchihasta*. The divine dancer is flanked by a pair of musicians, a flutist to the right and one sounding the cymbals to the left.

From Quang Tri there is a carving of ten-armed Śiva dancing in *chatura* in the Cham Museum (Fig. 25). This figure shows a certain amount of folk spirit in it. He does not carry any attributes, there is an emphasis on the *saṁdamśamudrā*, as some of his hands are in this attitude. The main hands are in *abhaya* and

FIG. 25. Ten-armed Śiva dancing, 8th century A.D., Quang Tri, Cham Museum, Danang.





FIG. 27. Kālī dancing, 8th century A.D., Mison, Cham Museum, Danang.

FIG. 26. Śiva dancing with left foot on seated bull, 8th century A.D., Po Nagar de Nha-trang.



FIG. 28. Indrāṇī dancing, 9th century A.D., Chanh lo, Cham Museum, Danang.



FIG. 29. Sarasvatī dancing, 9th century A.D., Chanh lo, Cham Museum, Danang.

daṇḍahasta. The countenance suggests a deep contemplative attitude. The *jaṭās* are peculiarly arranged, curling up at the top as a single dextral curl. To the right, a devotee prostrates reverently at his feet; to the left a Gaṇa points to Śiva's hand in *saṃdāṃśa*, almost as if to suggest that the supreme knowledge of life and beyond, the very summum bonum of existence, has to be understood in the language of Naṭarāja's gesture.

The tradition of the Mātṛikās dancing, which

is well illustrated in several Indian examples from Bādāmī in the South to Rājasthān in the North and from Junāgarh in the West to Bhubaneśvar in the East, is very well reflected in interesting examples of the dance of the Mothers, Durgā, Kālī, Kaumārī, Indrāṇī and Sarasvatī. Three fine examples from the Cham Museum may be studied from this point of view. One of them (Fig. 27) is ten-armed Kālī or Durgā dancing in *lalita*. Just as the tradition of Kāraikkālamaiyār has travelled to Cambodia and Vietnam, there is here also



FIG. 30. Śiva dancing on Apasmāra with a prabhāvali of flames around him, from manuscript in Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient.

repeated the legend of the dance of Kālī with Śiva, whom she challenged to keep pace with her, as the story goes, in regard to the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava* of Śiva at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu. Among the famous *tāṇḍavas* enumerated in Southern Śilpa texts, *Kālikātāṇḍava* is a prominent one.

In the Udayeśvara temple at Udaipur the dance of Sarasvatī is associated with Umā's dance, both supplementing the main performance of Śiva. The swan at her foot is very prominent. Not only is the swan the vehicle and symbol of Sarasvatī but its sweet note is as beautiful from her anklets, attracting flights of swan. It is interesting that in this example from Chanh lo, there is almost the spirit of Sarasvatī's dance in the Udayeśvara temple repeated (Fig. 29).

The other one, also from Chanh lo, shows one of the Mātṛikās, Indrāṇī, dancing (Fig. 28). She is four-armed, carries the *vajra* and lotus in both her right hands; one of her hands to the left carries the holy water vessel, the other

assures protection indicated by *abhaya*. There are devotees on either side. These, along with Kālī dancing from Mi-son, clearly illustrate the dance of Mātṛikās as a popular theme in Champā.

There are two other figures from Thap-mam in the Cham Museum, Da Nang, described by Jean Boisselier as masculine deities. Both of them have four arms each, two arms holding the sword and trident, the other pair forming a *karkaṣa hasta* above the head. It is just possible because of the third eye on the forehead, prominently shown, that it is intended to represent Śiva dancing, as we see from the innumerable representations of the dancing form of Śiva, so very popular in this part of the country. It is interesting that the Indian traditions from different areas were combined here to form a peculiar interesting new type which has its own importance in the history of the development of the iconography of this deity.

Thailand

The presence of Kāraikkālammaiār in close association with Naṭarāja flanked by



FIG. 31. Kālāntaka Śiva dancing, from manuscript in Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient.



FIG. 32. *Natarāja* from Thailand, 15th-16th century A.D., Musée de Vang, Bangkok.

Brahmā and Viṣṇu keeping time as he dances points to the tradition in South India that has travelled to this far off country, Cambodia. An even more interesting, though somewhat late representation in a drawing reveals a still more pointed transplantation of cultural theme from Tamiḷnāḍu to Thailand. In a recent article P. Neelakanta Sarma has elucidated several drawings by translating the legends under each figure of a complete representation of the Hindu Pantheon in an album from Thailand from the collection of manuscripts from Ecole Française d'Extreme-Orient. It is interesting to note that one of them is a representation

of Śiva in the peculiar South Indian style of a *prabhā* of flames that surrounds the dancing Lord, crushing ignorance personified as a dwarf and styled *Muyalagan* in Tamil, corresponding to *Apasmāra* in Sanskrit. The title given here in Thailand characters is *braḥ-praḥmeśvar-heyṃp-mūlagahṇī*, meaning *Parameśvara* crushing *Mūlaga* (Fig. 30). Though *Kāraikkālammai* is peculiar to Tamiḷnāḍu and occurs only in Cambodia, this feature of a circle of flames is absent there. It is interesting to find it here.

Another picture in the Album is Śiva as *Kālāntaka* dancing on *Kāla* himself, Death



FIG. 33. Wall painting showing Śiva dancing, 8th century A.D., Tadjikistan, Central Asia.

that Śiva overcame to save his devotee Mārkaṇḍeya. Both in the Bṛhadiśvara temple at Tañjāvūr and at Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram, Kālāntaka is specially represented in a form identical with earlier form occurring at Koḍumbālūr and even at Mahābalipuram respectively in the earliest Choḷa and Pallava mode. The same style of representation can be easily distinguished here (Fig. 31) in the picture from Thailand. The legend given below is in Thai *brah-īśvar-heyīp-aṅgukaḥ-brhm*, meaning Īśvara crushing Antaka. Neelakanta Sarma feels that *Aṅgukaḥ*, the word in Thai for Antaka is misspelt to mean Andhaka. This is not Andhakāntaka but Antakāntaka. So far no definite representation of Andhakāntaka is known from South India. This is clearly the prototype of Antakāntaka so popular in South India, particularly in Choḷa representations.

As long ago as in 1895, Lucien Fournereu illustrated in his *Le Siam Ancien*, a bronze image of Naṭarāja of the South Indian type (Fig. 32), four-armed and dancing on Apasmāra with a *prabhāvali* around. His hands are in *abhaya* and

gajahasta, carry the drum and a flame of fire. The *jaṭās* rest on the shoulder as in one of the types following the Melaperumballam Naṭarāja. Gaṅgā is shown on the *jaṭās* very close to his ear, with hands in adoration. The *jaṭās*, tied up above, are in a peculiar local style, and in the twist of each individual *jaṭā*, resemble the twisted *jaṭās* from Ceylon. The necklet is peculiar, and not at all in South Indian fashion, though following the South Indian type. It is purely a creation of the metal craftsman of Thailand. This is interesting for comparison with the drawings of Naṭarāja discussed above.

Central Asia

From the northern borders of Kashmir to Central Asia, the flow of the cultural stream has not at all been strained. At Pandrathan (*Purāṇasthāna*) near Śrīnagar in Kashmir, a number of sculptures of the 8th-9th century A.D. have been found, among which a large sized seated three-faced Śiva is very interesting for comparison with a painted wooden panel from Dandan Uiliq near Khotan, also representing three-headed Śiva, four-armed, wearing a tiger skin, with

his legs crossed, on a cushion supported by a pair of bulls. In this, the central face is the pleasant, beautiful countenance of Śiva, the face to the proper right the fearful *ghora* or *raudra* type, while the one to the proper left is the pleasant feminine face of Umā. A similar figure on a mural fragment from Kuduk-Koil is interesting for comparison. This is a favourite theme also in early medieval Kashmir sculpture portraying Śaivite icons. Gaṅgā shown flying above this seated figure in Kashmir brings it in close consonance with a sculpture from neighbouring Nepal, where Śiva as Gaṅgādhara receives Gaṅgā descending on his head in *gaṅgāvatarāṇa*, with the river herself peculiarly delineated, with the scarf held in both her hands fluttering, suggesting the cool breeze of the stream.

The crowned Buddha wearing jewels, represented at Fondukistan, as a great favourite, has travelled through Kashmir into the dominions of the Pālas. The beautiful sculpture of crowned and jewelled Buddha in the Śrī Pratāp Singh Museum at Śrīnagar is a fine example of

this interesting connection with Fondukistan, with the bejewelled figure of Buddha representing the compromise between emperor and monk, to recall the prediction of the astrologers for the new born babe of Śuddhodana, of the two possibilities—either the universal Emperor or the universal Master after the supreme enlightenment. This almost incongruous combination of a monk's garb with the royal decoration in a variety of rich jewellery, probably a special feature of Fondukistan, has found appreciative expression as an idea in Kashmir as well as in Eastern Indian sculpture under the Pālas, where it is an oft-met theme.

The travel of ideas, both [literary and artistic, from India to Central Asia can also be easily seen in such figures like the damsel in the lotus pool from Dandan Uiliq, an exquisite example of classical Indian grace found in Central Asia. It recalls a verse of Kālidāsa describing a summer scene when the lotus stalks in the pond, rise out of the water as it recedes from the steps of the pond, so that the damsel stands only up to her hip in water as she steps in for her bath: *uddaṇḍapadmam grihadīrghikāṇām nārīnitambadvayasam babbhūva* (*Raghuvamśa* XVI, 46). Even the identical pose of the figure may be seen in several earlier Indian sculptures, indicating the source of the motif.

As the influence of Buddhist art from India can be traced in the figures of Buddha in the cave of the thousand Buddhas at Tunhuang in China, it is interesting to study the travel of motifs backwards and forwards from India to Central Asia and back through Bamiyan, Gandhāra, Kashmir and Punjab.

Against this background, it is interesting to find Śiva as the supreme dancer in a wall painting at Piandjikent, on the river Zeravashan in Tadjikistan in the U.S.S.R (Fig. 33). This painting was discovered in 1962 by Prof. A. M. Belenickij during the course of excavations there. It has been published by P. Banerjee who has described and identified it with the dancing form of Śiva. Here the figure is blue in colour against a red ochre background, which very well goes with the concept of Śiva as *Nilalohita*. He is clad in a tiger skin, as he should be, because the tiger was one of the monsters created by the confounded ascetics of Dārukāvana to destroy Śiva, which he overcame and the hide of which he used as his garment. The halo around the face is indicative of divinity. He is only two-



FIG. 34. Sixteen-armed Śiva dancing on Nandi, Pāṭan, Sundarī Chowk.

FIG. 35. Eighteen-armed Ardhanārīśvara dancing with one foot on bull and another on lion.





FIG. 36. Śiva and Pārvatī watching dance of Bhṛīṅgi and others; Gaṅgā descending on Śiva's head in gaṅgāvataraṇa pose, Kumbheśvara temple, Pāṭan.

armed and his *jaṭās* are fluttering along with festoons and the ends of a scarf tied on his fore-arms. The *yajñopavīta* has tinkling bells to keep time to his dance movements. Śiva is dancing in *ālīḍha*, the warrior stance to suggest his *antaka* form either as Gajāntaka or Tripurāntaka. His triumph over the Tripuras, and his dance of victory immediately after, is so well known, that this sculpture suggests the supreme warrior that Śiva is. The ends of the scarfs and the festoons fluttering upward like the tongues of flames of fire almost suggest *Tripuradāha*—the brazen cities ablaze. The tiger skin worn by Śiva is so fashioned that it clearly recalls similar representations from the Gandhāra area of Gaṇeśa from near Kabul, wearing a similar animal hide, which, from an inscription could be ascribed to about the 7th century.

A. C. Soper in his editorial on this paper of Banerjee has drawn attention to an incised figure of Śiva, dancing beside a bull on a *sūtra*

pillar from Turfan, which was formerly in the Museum für Folklorekunde in Berlin. The interesting feature about this is that it very closely resembles the painted panel from Piandjikent. This is against one of the sides of the shaft which is octagonal at the bottom. It appears to represent this dancing Śiva as Īśāna, the *dikpāla*. The other *dikpālas* like Indra, Agni, etc. may be the figures on the rest of the sides. We know from other Indian sculptures their dancing association with Śiva as the principal dancer. Though the shaft itself is Buddhist, the *dikpālas* are represented here, as the concept itself is not opposed to Buddhist thought, that recognises the lords of the quarters, though giving them a subordinate place in its pantheon of gods and godlings.

The plants and lotus at the feet of Śiva have been interpreted by Banerjee as indicative of the earth. He quotes the verse of *Mahimnastava* to show how Śiva stamped the earth and almost imperilled it. He also makes a suggestion that this may be the earth and water form of Śiva, the plants for earth and lotus for water, which, with the other elements, fire, air and sky, sun, moon and sacrificer constitute the eight-fold form of *aṣṭamūrti* of Śiva described in the opening verse of Kālidāsa's *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*.

Nepal

Nepal has also examples, though late, of this type. There is a Śiva with ten arms carrying the usual attributes like *akṣamālā*, sword, trident, drum, *khaṭvāṅga*, *pāśa* and *kuṇḍikā* while the main pair is in *abhaya* and *karihasta*. The bull looks up with great joy. Gaurī is standing close to Śiva. A pair of Gaṇas plays musical instruments, one of them a drum.

Another image shows a sixteen-armed Śiva dancing on Nandī seated (Fig. 34). He carries the *pāśa*, *vajra*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *kuṭhāra*, *triśūla*, *ḍamaru*, *dhanus*, *aṅkuśa* and *chakra*. The attributes in three of the hands are lost as they are broken. The main arms are in *abhaya* and *karihasta*. The topmost right hand touches the *jaṭā*. Śiva is here shown wearing a garland of skulls. A weird company of Gaṇas, all with

animal faces, are shown playing musical instruments like drums, cymbals and bugles to keep time. This is also a late one and is from Pāṭan, Sundarī Chowk.

The tradition of Ardhanārīśvara dancing with the legs, one on a bull and the other on a lion, obtains in Nepal and there is an interesting eight-faced, sixteen-armed Ardhanārīśvara dancing. The eight arms to the right carry a corpse, *khaṭvāṅga*, sword, *triśūla*, noose, *aṅkuśa*, *pāśa*, *ḍamaru*, *kūṭhāra* and the cut-head of a demon. The series to the left carry such attributes as the *viṇā*, *daṇḍa*, *akṣhamālā*, *chāmara*, *pushpa*, *pāśa* and *paśu*. The main hands are in the attitude of *saṁdamśa* or *vyākhyāna*. The difference in the ear ornaments, the female breast to the left and the lion beneath the left foot, suggest the Devī half on the left. The figure itself is in *ālīḍha*, or warrior attitude. It is the dance of the warrior. The *Nāga* curled up three times, as the *kuṇḍala* on the right ear and the ruby-set earring on the left, clearly recall the description of dancing Ardhanārīśvara by Śaṅkara: *pradīptaratnojjvalakuṇḍalāyaisphuranmahāpannagabhūṣaṇāya*. This dance of Śiva with one foot on the lion and the other on the bull has been graphically described by both Ratnākara and Maṅkha in their *kāvyas* on Śiva, *Haravijaya* and *Srikanṭhacharita*.

A terracotta image of Ardhanārīśvara dancing in *lalita* with the legs of the Śiva and Umā halves planted on the bull and lion is a graceful representation (p. 91, Fig. 3). The third eye is a common factor for both, but the ear-rings differ. It is a *ratnakunḍala* to the left and the snake curled up into a *kuṇḍala* on the right. To the right, there is a *muṇḍamālā*, but in continuation to the left, it is a garland of flowers. The bracelets and armlets are entwined *Nāgas* to the right, while it is the regular series of gem-decked bracelets on the arms of the female half. While a rich flower-decked silken lower garment adorns the left half, it is a tiger hide that covers the right thigh. Even on the foot, it is a serpent entwined on one and an anklet on the other of the Ardhanārīnaṭeśa as Śaṅkara would have it: *pādāravindārpitahamsakāyaispādābjarājad-phaṇinūpurāya*. He is only four-armed. Since the hands are damaged, it is only the *akṣhamālā* in one of Śiva's hands that can be seen; the other probably may have carried the *khaṭvāṅga*. In the case of Umā half, one of the hands holds a lotus while the other which may have held a mirror is damaged. Even in the representation of *hāras*, there is a difference in male and female

attire. This dance of Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara is more frequently represented in Nepal though it does occur in other parts of India also.

Nepal being the home of several tāntrik deities, there are unusual figures here whose iconography in itself is most interesting. There is a female counterpart of Harihara dancing in the *Vaiṣṇavasthāna* with legs resting on Garuḍa and Nandī. The hands on the right half representing the Śakti of Viṣṇu carry *śaṅkha*, *chakra*, *gadā*, *padma* and *vajra*, while on the left half of Śiva they carry *triśūla*, *pushpa*, *khaṭvāṅga*, *nāga-pāśa* and *ḍamaru*, the main hands being in *abhaya* and *varada*. The left half of the long garland has human skulls while the corresponding part to the right is composed of flowers. There are twelve arms and six faces in two tiers of three each. This image is from Rāñi Pokhara in Kaṭhmandu.

Another Ardhanārīśvara with eighteen arms dancing on Nandī and the lion, both of which look up with wonder at the weird figure, composed of the fusion of their master and mistress, shows the usual difference in the *kuṇḍalas*, the silken garment to the left and tiger skin to the right and so forth (Fig. 35). The female breast clearly distinguishes the feminine part to the left. As usual in all dance figures of Śiva from Nepal, the topmost right hand touches the *jaṭāmakuṭa*. The other hands carry the sword, drum, noose, arrow, wheel, thunderbolt, skull-cap, and *khaṭvāṅga*. The corresponding hands to the left carry the shield, mirror, bow, staff, bell, skull-cap, the cut-head of a demon and water vessel. The main hands are in *abhaya* and *gajahasta*. The figure is shown dancing in *ardhaparyāṅka*. On top of this is repeated the same type of dancing figure with the number of arms reduced to eight. On the pedestal, there are eight weird Gaṇas with animal faces flanking Bhṛīṅgi in the centre and dancing. They play the drum and cymbals and sound the bugle.

Very often in sculpture from Nepal, Śiva and Pārvatī are shown seated on Kailāsa, with their full retinue, watching the dance of the Gaṇas, particularly Bhṛīṅgi and Skanda. This is to suggest that as they are exponents of dance, they take a delight in watching others dance and interpret the great science created by them. A sculpture from a water fountain in the Kumbheśvara temple at Pāṭan, shows this happy spirit of Śiva witnessing the dance of Gaṇas, Skanda and Bhṛīṅgi, enthusiastically dancing with beaming faces. While Bhṛīṅgi

dances in the *bhujāṅga* pose, Skanda is in the *ūrdhvajānu* attitude, Gaṇeśa starting the dance in *vaishṇavasthāna*. The main figure itself, being a representation of Śiva holding up a *jaṭā* for receiving Gaṅgā, is the Gaṅgādhara form. But what is most interesting here is the very difficult dance pose of *gaṅgāvatarāṇa*, specially shown here as the attitude in which Gaṅgā descends on Śiva's locks. This is probably the only place in India where Gaṅgā is shown in the *nāṭya* attitude of *gaṅgāvatarāṇa* as she descends on Gaṅgādhara's locks (Fig. 36). The legs bent and the feet resting on the head with the hands folded in *añjali*, the head raised up but the body itself topsy-turvy, compose this dance attitude. The representation of the sun, high up in the sky, shows the height from which Gaṅgā is descending, as *svargaṅgā* descending on the locks of Śiva seated on the Kailāsa mountain. Her additional pair of arms holds her fluttering garment to suggest the force with which she is descending, the garment wind-filled like a sail and suggesting great velocity.

Another sculpture from the same place represents Śiva and Pārvatī, again watching the dance of Gaṇeśa, Skanda and Bhṛīṅgi, Gaṇeśa this time more vigorous in his movements than the others. The Gaṇas keep time with cymbals and drums as an orchestral aid to the dance. The delight of Śiva and his appreciation is clearly visible in his beaming face and the *amṛitakalasa* both he and Umā are holding, almost suggesting that they are sprinkling on earth the joy of immortality (p. 32, Fig. 8). The hands of Devī and Śiva in *abhaya* and *varada* also suggest the same. It is interesting to compare with this the literary picture of *amṛitakalasa* in the hands of Śiva and Devī given by Maṅkha in his *Śrīkaṇṭhacharita*.

Ceylon

The island of Ceylon, now called Śrī Laṅkā, Iḷam as it is known in medieval Tamil inscriptions from the Choḷa and Pāṇḍyan country, has had a long history of intercourse with India. The Buddhist monks who made Amarāvati and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa great in early South India history were closely in touch with Ceylon and her great monuments and similarly the Ceylonese monks with the *stūpas* in the mainland. The moonstones in Ceylon recall similar semicircular decorative steps leading on to the *stūpas* in the Kṛishṇā valley. Mānavarman of Ceylon was a great friend of Narasimhavarman, the famous Pallava warrior king of Kāñ-



FIG. 37. *Natarāja* with thick *jaṭās* as a mass, Choḷa, 10th-11th century A.D., Polonnaruwa, Colombo Museum.

chi, who with the aid of his navy, restored him to the throne he lost by a wicked usurpation. The Choḷas and the Pāṇḍyas were frequently in Ceylon and the conquest of the island is very often repeated in inscriptions like those of Rājarāja and Rājendra. Several Choḷa temples exist in Ceylon to proclaim its close contact with the mainland. Undoubtedly the most fervent religious offerings were made in Ceylon in the form of bronzes to the temples, judging from the quality and workmanship, peace, tranquillity, religious emotion and devotional beatitude in the face of each one of the four great Tamil saints who gave the treasures of *Tevāram*, Tirunāvukkaraśu, endearingly styled Appar, the baby saint Tirujñānasambandar, Sundaramūrti and Māṇikkavāchakar. It is believed that one who is not moved by the hymns from the *Tiruvāchakam* of Māṇikkavāchakar is indeed stone-hearted. Intoxicated by the soul-stirring hymns of these great saints the sculptors in metal from Ceylon created these strikingly beautiful bronzes of the saints. They are somewhat different from what we normally know in the mainland itself, but, at the same time, are so full of the spirit of the *Tevāram* hymns, which give them a deeply religious halo, that they must at once be pro-



FIG. 38. *Naṭeśa*, recent discovery, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Polonnaruwā Museum.

nounced as distinct, and undoubtedly a speciality of Ceylon.

It is not in the fashioning of these alone but in some other figures also, there is a distinctiveness noticed which should undoubtedly be pronounced as the work of Ceylonese craftsmen inspired by the craft from the mainland. There is, no doubt, in all these a certain crudeness which is offset by the freshness of approach and independent treatment to an extent. The *Tevāram* hymns have so appealed to the craftsmen or the devotees, donors, who insisted on these traits introduced in the metal images, that

there is for instance the five-hooded *nāga* entwining the *abhaya* hand in the recently discovered Naṭarāja from Polonnaruwā answering the literary description in Jñānasambandar's hymns. Similarly the *jaṭās*, though lost in the case of this Naṭarāja, are fortunately preserved in the earlier one also discovered at Polonnaruwā along with several other bronzes and discussed by Ramanathan and Coomaraswamy, and constitute a distinct mark. They closely follow the tradition and interpret as a commentary the text of the *Tevāram* hymns describing the *jaṭās* of Śiva as highly twisted and stiff. This Naṭarāja from Polonnaruwā in the Co-



FIG. 39. *Devī*, recent discovery, *Choḷa*, 11th century A.D., Polonnaruwā Museum.

lombo Museum has this unique form of the *jaṭās* cast as one mass, each *jaṭā* showing high twist as in a number of threads twisted presenting the appearance of a continuous string of beads (Fig. 37). It is this form which is again repeated in the *jaṭās* of Śiva in far off Prambanan in Indonesia. It is a small leaf from Ceylon that has been taken by the Indonesian sculptor to enrich his concept of Śiva.

In the images of Śiva as Vṛishabhāntika and Sundara, most beautifully fashioned, one cannot fail to notice a speciality of treatment. The

contours of the thighs, the anatomy of the face, the arrangement of the jewellery and, to an extent, the drapery, the *jaṭās* in the case of Śiva and the flowers on the hair knot of Sundaramūrti are specially characteristic of Ceylon.

Similarly Pārvatī, whether seated or standing, has peculiar characteristics that distinguish her. The anklets are distinctive, the *makarakuṇḍala* itself like a crocodile is very peculiar, the simplicity of the *suvarṇavaikakshaka* is characteristic and several other features



FIG. 40. Kāraikkālammai, recent discovery, Choḷa, 11th century A.D., Polonnaruwa Museum.

besides. The lotus pedestal itself, with a prominent central rib in each petal moulded, distinguishes the *padma* and *bhadrāpīṭha* of the bronzes from Ceylon.

In the case of the Natarāja from the earlier discovered images from Polonnaruwa and now in the Colombo Museum, the somewhat awkward disposition of the limbs and the gait in dance and the uplifted leg all bespeak an attempt of the Ceylonese sculptor to fashion a great theme, where, though aesthetically he may not have so well succeeded, has, however, accomplished a pleasing distinctiveness. That it is an early eleventh century bronze is clear from the fact that the face bespeaks early workmanship as also several other features like the long chain of the necklet with banyan leaf-shaped pendant on the back hanging from it and the early lotus-shaped *śiraśchakra*.

In the Natarāja recently found in Polonnaruwa in 1960 and described by Dr. Godukombura, the fan-shaped decoration on top of the *jaṭā*, the representation of snake and moon in simple fashion, as almost merged on the sides, the

former to the right and the latter to the left, the absence of *kuṇḍalas* on both the ears, the rather stiff disposition of the necklet and necklace and *udarabandha*, the hands with the palms invariably flat, are all especially noteworthy features (Fig. 38). The palm of the hand carrying the fire on it, as also the *abhayaḥasta* and the fingers of the *kāriḥasta*, are absolutely flat. The serpent on the right hand in *abhaya* has five hoods and answers the hymnal description *kavartalaiyaravoṭu kaṇṭiyumpūṇṇar*, *Tevāratirupatikam* 78, 7; *araipulkumaintalai yāṭavaravam*, *Tevāratirupatikam* 39, 4; *aintalai yaravukōṇṭaraikkachaitta*, *Tevāratirupatikam*, 262, 6 of Tirujñānasambandar. Though the *jaṭās* which should have been separately fixed are now lost, the simple *śiraśchakra* as a natural lotus with central tassel, and the tassel from the necklace with banyan leaf-shaped pendant on the back, all indicate date as early as Early Choḷa. The *kinṇiṇis* or tiny anklet bells fastened to both the feet, a characteristic observed in all the Natarājas from Ceylon, in common with some from South India, mostly from the Pāṇḍyan country, answer the *Tevāram* description of the tinkling bells on the dancing feet of our Lord.

The pedestal is also extremely interesting as it shows five musical figures. The row starts with the famous devotee Kāraikkālammai playing the cymbals, then a Bhūtagaṇa blowing the conch, a ṛishi sounding the flute, Skanda playing the *ghaṭa* and a Bhūtagaṇa again sounding the cymbals. It is not always that the pedestal is so decorated. It is an unusual feature that makes this sculpture in metal all the more important and interesting.

The standing figure of Śivakāmasundarī, the consort of this deity, is equally interesting (Fig. 39). Her crown, the modelling of her face, the peculiar *makarakuṇḍalas*, the *suvarṇavaikakshaka*, the simple *śiraśchakra*, the disposition of drapery and a flattened series of tiny rings, making up a larger anklet on each of her feet, are all noteworthy features.

The most interesting point about the recently discovered hoard of images is that Kāraikkālammai has been given here a very special place (Fig. 40). It is well known that at Gaṅgaikōṇḍacholapuram, Rājendra accorded her a very important place in the niche devoted to Natarāja on the south wall of the shrine. We know of some bronze images of Kāraikkālammai from temples in South India, but here, as at Banteai Srei in distant Cambodia, there is a

special prominence shown to this great female saint. She is almost depicted as a caricature. Her emaciated form and hideous appearance have given the metal sculptor a theme to create an almost refreshingly original figure. The large Gaṇeśa image also in metal has a Pāṇḍya and Chera touch about it.

Though the Somāskanda, Sukhāsana, Chandraśekhara, Bhairava, Āliṅganachandraśekhara, Vṛishavāhana and other concepts have found expression in metal figures, found in

Ceylon, it is the Naṭarāja form that has again been more profusely represented being a favourite; and it should be noted that in Ceylon the *jaṭās* of Naṭarāja offer an individuality which distinguish this metal image from the rest in the mainland. Even in the small miniature image of Naṭarāja in the museum at Anurādhāpura, this special characteristic of *jaṭā* can be observed. Ceylon's contribution to the study of the Naṭarāja form has in quality far exceeded the quantity obtained by excavation or discovery.

SPOTS SPECIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH NATARAJA AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Adrisabhā

Natarāja's dance is specially associated with certain sacred spots where there are various *sabhās*. Śiva's dance hall with the stage arranged is the *sabhā*. Śiva as Girīśa, who is specially associated with the Himālayas as his abode, naturally has a principal dancing hall on the Himālaya itself. It is an open air theatre with the gods assembled at dusk to witness his dance. As the *Pradoshastava* puts it, it is on the level ground on the peak of the Himālaya where Śiva dances, when Gaurī, the mother of the three worlds, is enthroned to witness his dance. The word used here is *kailāsaśailabhuvane*. Mañkha rightly calls this *adrisabhā*, the stage on the mountain, and Śiva himself as *adrisabhāpati*, the Lord of the dance stage on the hill. Mañkha is conscious of how he is using his poetic skill in praising the great dancing lord and not any unworthy sovereign on earth. 'Invaluable poetry of several great poets, spread out in the market place of the courts of royal palaces, have been insulted by rejection of their purchase; I, Mañkha, am acting as the bard to the Lord of the dance hall, on the mountain Kailāsa, the pollen of the flowers at whose feet are touched by the *makara* decoration on the crown of Indra, the destroyer of mountains': *sarvaiḥ kaiśchana dūshitāḥ kavīribhiḥ prastīrya prīthvibhrītām āsthānāpaṇasimni vikraya-tiraskārād anarghā girāḥ devasyādribhiduttamāṅga-makarilīdhāṅghrīreṇusrajāḥ kailāsādrisabhāpater iti mayā mañkhena mañkhyāyate* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* 1, 56).

The word *adrisabhā* is particularly noteworthy as it shows that in the twelfth century, Mañkha was fully aware of the several *sabhās* in which Natarāja is reputed to have danced, the principal natural one being that on mount Kailāsa itself, which he naturally calls *adrisabhā* and Śiva himself *adrisabhāpati*. The name was thus familiar, as also the form at Chidambaram, where the temple itself is known as Koil, i.e. the temple and *sabhā* (the dance hall), the *sabhā*, and, naturally, the lord of the stage of this dance hall, the *sabhāpati*.

Mañkha, specially interested in describing the dance form of Śiva, like Ratnākara in his *Haravijaya*, is, as may be expected to be, fully aware of the importance of Chidambaram and the dance of Śiva in the sky. It is clear that he thought in terms of the dance of Śiva in *chit-sabhā* or Chidambaram and the dance of the Lord in *ambara* or the sky. That is why he fancies Girīśa, the Lord of the mountains, dancing in the sky car, with solar and lunar wheels on it, making the mountains experience the blow of the thunderbolt, by the mere pats of his feet and the thuds of his arms: *chandrārka-chakra-ghaṭa-nadyurathādhirūḍham tam chaṇḍatāṇḍavadaśam giriśam prapadye yadbāhughātakalayā paritāḍyamāno vajrāhatim sukham amanyata śailavargah* (*Śrīkaṇṭhacharita* 1, 50).

Here the violent *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva has such an effect on the surface of the mountain that it is not only Kailāsa but the whole mountain range, that experiences its impact, and feel, that even the blow of Indra's thunderbolt was a pleasant pat, compared to these violent treads and thuds.

In this context, it really touches the heart to recall the anxiety of a devotee as he imagines the pain experienced by the Lord, whose omnipotence and super-power he forgets for a moment and attributes to him the same frailty as that of the mortals. Śaṅkara almost himself experiences the pain as he exclaims that Śiva's feet certainly should have felt great pain by dancing on the hard rocky mountain slopes and requests him to deign to dance in his lotus heart. Śaṅkara was fully aware of the *sabhā* on the mountain, to which *Pradoshastava* specifically alludes as the scene of Śiva's natural *sandhyā* dance in the evening.

Mañkha, who is aware of the tradition in Eastern India, has a delightful fancy in regard to Śiva's dance on the Himālaya. Himālaya who has the touch of Śiva's foot all over his peak in his static (*sthāvara*) aspect, almost as if out of a desire to experience it in a mobile (*jaṅgama*) form, appears in the guise of the

white bull, supporting Śiva as he dances, at the same time almost creating the impression of the milky ocean itself, arrived in that garb, probably to gaze at his own offspring the moon, tied on the locks of Śiva: *sarvatreśvara-pādapadmasahito bhuyāsam ityāśayā yadvyājāt sphatikādriṇeva vihitam rūpāntaram jaṅgamam yaḥ kshīrabdhīr ivāgatas śivajaṭābaddham sutam vikshitum trāīyakshaḥ kuśalāya bhāsmānarajogauras sa gaur astu vaḥ* (Śrīkaṇṭhacharita 1, 54).

Ādichitsabhā

There are other *sabhās* where Śiva dances. Chidambaram is no doubt famous, but claiming a superiority even over it, being considered the original Chidambaram or Ādichidambaram as it is called, is Tiruveṅgāḍu or Śvetāraṇya, near Śiyāḷi. The local legend has it that Śiva danced here seven items of *tāṇḍava* to please his *bhakta* Śvetaketu—the *ānanda*, *sandhyā*, *samhāra*, *tripurānta*, *ūrdhva*, *bhujāṅga* and *lalita*. These seven *tāṇḍavas* are also specially described in Śilpa texts and it makes this tradition of association of these *tāṇḍavas* with Tiruveṅgāḍu very important indeed. The text, *Śrītattvanidhi*, has, however, some variations in the names of just a few. It mentions *ānanda*, *sandhyā*, *umā*, *kālikā*, *gaurī*, *tripura* and *samhāra*.

As the tradition of the dance of the goddess Kālī, along with Śiva, is present here, and she is reputed to have danced both *Gaurītāṇḍava* and *Kālikātāṇḍava*, the seemingly obvious difference in nomenclature in the seven dance modes, associated with Tiruveṅgāḍu and the Śilpa text, is almost obliterated. Śiva's *ūrdhva-tāṇḍava* and *bhujāṅgatāṇḍava* are only expressions born out of *Kālikātāṇḍava* and *Gaurītāṇḍava*, as he is known to have raised up one of his legs in *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, to denote his superiority in prowess over Kālī, who successfully competed with him in every other item of dance.

The image of Śiva Naṭarāja here has seven weapons—*āyudhas*, i.e. *vetālam*, *khaḍga*, *dhakkā*, *maṇi*, *kheṭa*, *kapāla* and *triśūla*. Bhadrakālī, with eight arms, is shown seated opposite her Lord. It is interesting also to know from an inscription, on the north wall of the temple, mentioning a gift of gold for offerings to the image of the dancing Lord, that it mentions him as Āḍavallān, i.e. the prince among dancers, in the temple of Veṅkāḍuḍayār (Inscription 449 of 1918).

Śiva's excellence in his dance here is extolled

by Sundaramūrti, who describes the Lord of Veṅkāḍu as dancing, in deference to the wishes of devotees contemplating him, excelling in the art, as the whole world extolled, and the Bhūtagaṇas sang in accompaniment, while, likewise, in the form of the seven musical notes, he chanted the *Vedas*, surrounded by Siddhas (saints), to enlighten the world: *kātalāle karutun toṇṭar kāraṇattarāki nīnre pūtam pāṭap purintu naṭtam puvani yetta āṭavallīr nītiyāka eḷilochai nittarākich chittar chūla vetamotit tiriva tenne velai chūlven kāṭavīre* (Tevārattirupatikamkal, Sundaramūrtisvāmigaḷ 7, 6, 7).

Tirunāvukkaraṣu describes the great dancer of Tiruveṅkāḍu as a blazing light of knowledge, revealing himself both as a dancer and as the eight-formed one. He is both *naṭtamūrti* and *aṭṭamūrti*. Graciously receiving the jasmine and lotus flowers offered by devotees to be wound on his locks, and contemplated as the Almighty, the Beginning of all, Śiva shines in his dancing form as the very flame of knowledge, revealing himself eight-fold in body in Veṅkāḍu, where the yearning mind should reach him: *paṭṭam iṇṭai yavaikoṭu pattarkal chīṭṭa nāṭiyenruchintai cheyyave naṭṭa mūrttiṇṇā nachchūḷarāyinnra aṭṭa mūrttitan veṅkā ṭaṭai neṇche* (Tevārattirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu 5, 49, 8).

Ratnasabhā

Another famous place associated with Śiva's dance is Tiruvālaṅgāḍu. The dance hall is here famous as *ratnasabhā*, the hall decorated with rubies, and the Lord of this is *ratnasabhāpati*. The local tradition has it that here was a great forest of banyan trees and Kālī, who made it her abode, was very fierce, and Śiva himself had to come to quell her ferocity. A sage, Sunanda, had experienced a great desire to see the Lord dance, and prayed that he might be vouchsafed that vision. Śiva directed him to this forest of banyan trees to await it. He accordingly repaired to that place and engaged himself in penance, awaiting the grace of the Lord to present himself as the great universal dancer. So completely lost was he in trance that he was covered up by anthills and formations of earth, and above his head there was a luscious growth of reeds, almost looking like matty hair sprouting up.

On an occasion, the snake king Karkoṭaka, adorning Śiva as a bracelet, inadvertently spurted poison on Śiva's hand. This incensed the Lord who cursed him to be born on earth and await his pleasure till he presented him-

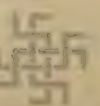
self at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu to give a vision of his divine dance to sage Sunanda.

Harassed by the wicked demons Nimba and Śumbha, celestials and mortals, sages and even animals and birds appealed to Devī, who, in her infinite grace, created from the dark ends of her eyelashes, a terrific power in the form of Kālī, who was ordered by her to destroy them. A host of companions, as frightful as Kālī herself, sprang forth to accompany Kālī. Soon the demons were killed. But Kālī herself became a terror in that forest, which she made her home, forbidding the entry of any into her territory. Karkoṭaka who had descended on earth as a sage, and was performing penance along with sage Sunanda, in that very forest, had no happy time there.

At the intercession of sage Nārada, Śiva agreed to quell the fury of Kālī, and came down from Kailāsa to Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, the abode of Kālī. It was now time that he gave the vision of his divine dance to the long waiting sages. When Śiva approached, Kālī at first threatened him with dire consequences, if he did not quit her area in the forest, but later came to an understanding with him that he could fight and establish his right. It was mutually decided that the battle of dance, a contest dear to both, would be the most appropriate. Kālī followed Śiva who proceeded ahead to choose the best place for arranging the stage for dance, which he pointed out at the spot where now stands the temple at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu. As dance required suitable orchestral music, and Kālī demanded it, Śiva provided it in a trice, as at his merest wish, there were all the celestials around him, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Yama, Sūrya, Chandra, Kubera, Agni, Vāyu and others. The Pramathagaṇas of Śiva, the eleven Rudras, the twelve Ādityas and others were there—Nandikeśvara, Bhṛingi, Bāṇāsura, Kumbhodara, were also among the spectators. Śiva graciously called up the sages Karkoṭaka and Sunanda, of whom the latter was named by him Muñjikeśa, on account of the reeds that grew over the anthill on him. With celestial musical accompaniments commenced the softer aspect of dance, *lāsya*, in which Kālī really excelled and she almost claimed victory as her movements were as graceful as Śiva's. In his anxiety not to spill Gaṅgā or scatter the moon, stars and flowers on his *jaṭās*, Śiva's movements of the head were rather mild, which gave Kālī an opportunity to claim victory. But now Śiva commenced

the *tāṇḍava* dance, in this particular case what is known and specially associated with Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, the *chaṇḍa tāṇḍava*, terrific *tāṇḍava* dance. The time beat of Brahmā and the drum beat of Viṣṇu and Nandī, the vocal and instrumental music including the *vīṇā* and flute, by various celestials, Kinnarīs, Nāginīs, etc. rent the sky. Śiva shot up one of his legs and lifted up a hand to reach it. In his eight hands, he held the axe, the snake, the parrot, the drum, the trident, the garland of bells, the skull cap, one of the hands kept in the attitude of protection, and the other in *daṇḍahasta* attitude. The violent movement of his hands, spread all around, hit and scattered the stars in the sky, the eight snakes and the equal number of elephants, that eternally lift up the universe, the seven oceans and the seven sacred mountains, almost shrieked, rocked and surged in fright at the terrific pace of the *chaṇḍa tāṇḍava* of Śiva. At the request of the gods, Devī herself had to appeal to Śiva to lessen the pace of his dance in order to avert any calamity to the universe, like its getting reduced to the five elements by the ferocity of his dance movements. Graciously Śiva did so and blessed the ṛishis, particularly Muñjikeśa and Karkoṭaka. Out of modesty Kālī could not lift up her leg like Śiva and now that she was humbled, the Lord graciously announced that Kālī was second to none except himself in dance, and gave her a very honourable place, close to him, as the next greatest dancer after him.

It is interesting that Tirunāvukkaraśu, the famous Śaiva devotee, conjures up a picture of Kālī admiring Śiva. It is not only the legend of Śiva, dancing on a challenge from Kālī and overcoming her in this great art of Bharata, not Śiva's gracious appreciation of Kālī's dance, and pronouncing her, though she was vanquished, to be the best exponent of the art after himself, but it is also almost a return of the compliment from Kālī herself, who gazes with admiration at the form of Śiva in dance. Forgetting herself as equally a great dancer, she is lost in a trance, as it were, in her supreme adoration of the lovely form of Śiva in his *karaṇas* and *aṅgaḥāras* in dance. Tirunāvukkaraśu describes how, dressed appropriately for the company of his consort, and with the goddess of Gaṅgā tucked and almost walled up in his locks, himself singing Sāma hymns, Śiva of Ālaṅgāḍu dances as Kālī gazes at him in admiration: *kūṭinār umaitanoṭe kurippuṭai veṭaṅkoṇṭu chūṭinār kaṅkaiyālaich chuvariṭu chaṭai-yarpolum pāṭinār chāmaṇetam paimpolir paḷanai-*



meyār āṭinar kālikāna vāṭankāṭ ṭatikalāre (Tevā-rattirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu 4, 68, 8).

In the temple at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, there is an excellent metallic example of Śiva, eight-armed, dancing *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*, with all the appropriate attributes. In a small shrine close to his, there is another metallic image of Kālī eight-armed. The *sabhā* is *Ratnasabhā*.

This sacred spot is also associated with one of the greatest of devotees, Kāraikkāmmaiyār, who was most eager to see Śiva's dance. When she was proceeding to Kailāsa, on her head instead of on her feet, a strange sight that made even Pārvatī inquisitive to know who she was, and learn that it was a great devotee, who would not desecrate Mount Kailāsa by using her feet for walking on it, Śiva welcomed her and asked her to await his arrival at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, where he promised her a vision of his dance.

Of all the representations of Śiva's dance with Kāraikkāmmaiyār as one of the witnesses the most beautiful is that at Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-choḷapuram. She is shown as an emaciated ugly-looking hag, playing the cymbals and ecstatically enjoying the vision of Śiva's dance along with the Gaṇas. At Kailāsa Śiva asked her to proceed to Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, and the story goes that without waiting even a trice, she immediately turned and walked back on her head, till she reached the neighbourhood of Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, where the Lord himself came to greet her, and welcomed her to the sacred spot of his dance. As Śiva addressed her as Ammā, she hailed him as Appā and the place where they met is the sacred spot of Śiva known as Ammayappa. There is a metallic image of Kāraikkāmmaiyār at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, as she is one of the principal witnesses of Śiva's *tāṇḍava* at the spot.

Chidambaram has the legend of Vyāghrapāda and Patañjali. In Tiruvālaṅgāḍu, corresponding to these two sages are Muñjikeśa and Karkoṭaka. Karkoṭaka, a formidable snake king, born as a sage to witness Śiva's dance, is in serpentine form to provide a parallel to Ādiśeṣha, the lord of snakes, born as Patañjali, according to legend. Muñjikeśa, a great sage who cared very little for his physical comforts, and allowed a jungle growth above him, has almost the characteristics of Vyāghrapāda, equally averse to physical comforts and anxious

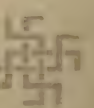
to clear the jungle to gather flowers and *bilva* leaves for the worship of the Lord.

There is a beautiful verse associated with this sacred spot, which gives a vision it would seem of Śiva's dance as *Ratnasabhāpati*. This *tāṇḍava* of Śiva, unlike the mild and joyous *ānandatāṇḍava* at Chidambaram, though terrific, as its name *chaṇḍatāṇḍava* implies, is yet a great source of prosperity that it assures. With the snake anklet on his slightly raised left leg, hissing with uplifted hood, with the golden bells on his waist sounding *jhaṇ jhaṇ* and scattering golden hue around, undermining the *tāṇḍava* of Kālī herself, and with his *kuṇḍala* ear-jewel shining bright on the ear, the terrific *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva, in the company of Chaṇḍikā and several Rākshasas, is indeed a bestower of prosperity: *kiñchitkuñchitavāma-pādavilasanmañjirachiñchitphaṇam kiñchitkāñchana-kiñkiṇjhaṇajhaṇadrāvam jagat kāñchanam kālītāṇḍavakhaṇḍanam pravilasatkarṇojjvalam kuṇḍalam chaṇḍam rākshasachaṇḍikāparivṛitam sampatkaram tāṇḍavam*.

Rajatasabhā

Madurai is another spot famous for a *sabhā* of Natarāja. Here the dance hall is of silver. It is called *rajatasabhā* or *velliambalam*. The Sanskrit work, *Hālāsyamāhātmya*, elaborately describes Śiva's *līlās* or sports in Madurai, and this has a Tamil version in the *Tiruviḷaiyāḍal-purāṇam*. The dance of Śiva in the silver hall is one of his *līlās*.

The legend associated with the special dance of Śiva narrates how Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda, who along with several sages had come to witness the marriage of princess Taḍātakā, Devī herself, born as the daughter of king Malayadhvaja Pāṇḍya, were hesitant to join the feast at mid-day, as they desired to hurry back to Chidambaram where it was their wont to witness at noon the dance of Śiva in the golden hall. As they also could not refuse to stay on for the feast, and found the situation rather delicate, they requested Sundareśvara himself to decide what they were to do. Śiva, Sundareśvara as he is known in Madurai, explained to them that if Chidambaram was the scene of the heart lotus of Virāṭpurusha, the Universal Being, Hālāsyā or Madurai was the *dvādaśāntasthāna*, and they could therefore witness his dance at this spot, which was not less sacred than Chidambaram itself. Very soon, there was a mad rush to witness the promised vision of Śiva's dance. In front of



the famous *garbhagriha*, known as *Indravimāna*, there appeared a gem-decked silver hall all ablaze with light. Here assembled all the *Pramathagaṇas*, exactly as at *Chidambaram*. There were here all the musical instruments and the self-same celestials handled them. Śiva now started dancing, his right foot firmly planted on the back of *Apasmāra* and the left raised a little in the *ānandatāṇḍava* mode. *Patañjali*, *Vyāghrapāda* and other sages and celestials witnessed this glorious sight with tears in their eyes, and at once burst into Śiva's praise in a hymn. One of the verses from this mentions the *tāṇḍavasvarūpa* of Śiva as assuring a gift of the four *purushārthas*—*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*: *chaturvidhārthadānaśaundatāṇḍavasvarūpiṇe sadā namaś śivāya te sadāśivāya sambhave*. In another verse, his name as *rajatasabhāpati* is mentioned. 'Salutation to you carrying the golden mountain as your bow, Lord of the silver hall of dance': *kanakagiriśarāsanāya tubhyam rajatasabhāpataye namaś śivāya*. The last verse of this hymn describes how beautiful is his dance, which is also styled *sundaratāṇḍava*. As Śiva, who dances here, is *Sundareśvara* himself, beauty incarnate, his dance is also equally charming, and is called *sundaratāṇḍava*, though because of its joyous atmosphere, it is also *ānandatāṇḍava*. 'Salutation to *Maheśvara*, Lord of *Hālāsya*, whose neck is decorated with the blue *hālāhala* poison, the spouse of the fish-eyed beautiful *Mīnākshī*, a dancer of charm': *hālāsyanāthāya maheśvarāya hālāhalālamkṛitakandharāya mīnekshaṇāyāḥ pataye śivāya namo namas sundaratāṇḍavāya (Hālāsyamāhātmya)*.

From that day, at the request of all the devotees assembled, noon time was chosen for the celebration of the dance festivity of Śiva every day in the silver hall. This was a dance just before the marriage feast.

The tradition of the reversed leg in this *ānandatāṇḍava* of Śiva has an equally interesting legend to explain it. A Pāṇḍyan king, *Rājaśekhara*, who was a great devotee of Śiva, was an adept in all the fine arts. He knew all the sixtyfour arts except one, and that was dance. He left out *nāṭya* out of modesty and devotion to Śiva, as he felt that his attempt at learning dance and performing it appeared almost ridiculous in the presence of the Lord of Dance himself in the silver hall. However, this was not to continue for very long.

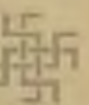
Soon, there was a scholar from the *Chola*

kingdom who came to his capital, and asked him whether he was not intellectually inferior to his own monarch, *Karikāla*, who knew all the sixty-four arts to perfection. This stung the king so much that he immediately resolved to learn the only remaining art which he had avoided. Very soon he was an adept in it. But this gave him also another experience, not only that of the intricacies of the *hastas*, *karaṇas*, *aṅgahāras*, etc., but also the difficulties involved in bodily movements and the exercise of the limbs. He now realised what a strain it was for Śiva to dance all the while on one leg, the right. So one evening, he approached the Lord in the silver hall and requested him to grant him a boon to reverse the foot on which the whole weight of his body rested in dance. He explained how he could not bear the sight of his difficulty in resting all the while on one foot, without changing over to the other, and threatened to cut off his own head if Śiva would not accede to his request. He placed his sword on the ground and bowed to him. Before he could raise his head, kind-hearted Śiva was already dancing with his legs reversed. Appreciating not only the devotion of the king, but also his tender-hearted approach towards even the Almighty, Śiva blessed him and promised ever to dance in this reversed mode in the *rajatasabhā*; and that has given a distinction to the *sundaratāṇḍava* of Śiva in the silver hall.

Everything about Śiva in *Ālavāi* (*Hālāsya* i.e. *Madurai*) is beautiful. Śiva is here *Sundara* and his dance is *sundara tāṇḍava*. He is styled *Āḷakan*, or the beautiful one. The famous Śiva devotee *Tirunāvukkaraṣu*, affectionately called *Appar* by *Jñānasambandar*, sings the glory of the Lord of *Ālavāi* and prays for his grace; 'O Lord of *Ālavāi* ! eternally youthful, beautiful bowman, great dancer, with beauty of immaculate gold, do bestow your grace on us': *kuḷakane kolavilli kūttane mātṭāyulla āḷakane yālavāyi lappane yaruḷ cheyāye (Tevāratirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu, 4, 62, 7)*.

The term *Ālavāi* has been variously interpreted in relation to the snake. One of them refers to the grip on the tail placed in its mouth by the reptile, while encircling the vast area that formed the ground plan of the city of *Madurai*.

The glory of *Ālavāi* (*Madurai*), with its great queen *Maṅgaiyarkaraśi* of the *Chola* family and the minister *Kulachcharai* men-



tioned by name by the boy saint Tirujñānasambanda, when he sang his *patigams*, or hymns, forms valuable historical material. Lost in a myriad or alone by himself, the devotee in the presence of the temple at Ālavai, with its lovely *vimānas* and *gopuras*, adored with bent head by Kulachcharai himself, experiences the Lord there enshrined, decorated with sweet-smelling *konrai* flowers and a garland of tender *bilva* leaves, adorned with the crescent moon and the celestial river settled on his locks, tied up crown-like, as the proper dress of a celestial dancer: *kaṇaṇ kaḷāy vārinun tamiyarāy varinu maṭiyavar taṅkaḷai kaṇṭāl kuṇaṅkoṭu paṇiyuṇ kula-chchirai kulāvun koṭuraṇ chūḷmaṇik koyil maṇaṅka-maḷ konrai vālarā maṭiyam vannivan kūvilamālai aṇaṇ kuvir rirunta chaṭaimuṭi yaṇṇa lālavā yāvatu mituve* (*Tevāratirupatikamkaḷ Tirujñānasambanda* 3, 120, 4).

The memories of Madurai, as the place where Śaivism was reestablished by the boy saint, who converted the Pāṇḍyan king, Niṇraśir Neḍumāran, from Jainism, and fulfilled the long cherished desire of his devoted queen and faithful minister, both supremely devoted to Śiva, well known as facts of history, require no explanation.

The Śaiva saints have recalled the earlier traditions, apart from historical facts, like the Pallava associations, starting from the time of Hiraṇyavarman at Chidaṁbaram, suggested in the *Tevāram* hymns. Tirunāvukkaraśu recalls the touching affection of the Pāṇḍyan king, who insisted on Śiva's changing his foot in dance, because of his concern for the fatigue caused to the leg, as the Lord danced night and day in the same position. This is easily seen in a very expressive line of the *Tevāram* hymn, where he queries the Lord, whether dancing night and day his foot is not tired: *antiyum pakalumāṭa aṭiyiṇai yalachuṅkollo* (*Tevāratirupatikamkaḷ, Tirunāvukkaraśu* 4, 23, 4). Though this is not a hymn he sang at Madurai, but only at Chidaṁbaram, the idea of the fatigued leg as the Pāṇḍyan king felt it is indeed quite important, and the hymnist could not get over the feeling, even in Chidaṁbaram, as he gazed at the Lord, dancing eternally on his right foot.

It is interesting that at Madurai, there is a shrine in the Sundarēśvara temple for Kāraikkālammaiyaṛ, the famous devotee, who is reputed to be ever witnessing the dance of Śiva, sounding the cymbals for him.

Tāmrasabhā

In the Pāṇḍyan territory itself, there is another great *sabhā* of Naṭarāja, where, in Tirunelveli, Śiva is styled Vrihivṛiteśvara. The special forest associated with this spot is Veṇuvana, or the forest of bamboos, and in the temple of Śiva here, the *sabhā* of Naṭarāja is of copper, *tāmrasabhā*. There are several sculptural representations of dance here and the pillars also produce musical notes at the merest tap.

The baby saint Tirujñānasambanda made a special point of visiting this famous shrine to extol the dancing Lord here. In one of his hymns, Sambanda questions Śiva himself, whether it was right that the Lord of Tirunelveli, with banners of the lofty mansions touching the moon on high, should dance snake-adorned on the burning ground, so unwelcome to his beautiful bride, the mountain princess, that smiles emitting rays of moonlight from her pearly teeth: *kāṇṭaku malaimakaḷ katirnilā muru-valchei taruḷave yum pūṇṭanākampuraṇ kāṭaraṇ kāṇaṭa māṭal peṇi iṇṭumā māṭaṅkaṇ māḷikai mīṭelu koṭimatiyam tiṇṭivantulaviya tirunelveli yurai chel-vartāme* (*Tevāratirupatikamkaḷ, Tirujñānasambanda* 3, 92, 4).

Chitrasabhā

Yet another *sabhā* famous for Naṭarāja is the *chitrasabhā* at Kuttālam. The tradition of associating Viṣṇu and Śiva together in dance is also here. The temple, which was originally for Viṣṇu, is reputed to have been turned essentially into a Śaiva one by Agastya, with Naṭarāja as the principal deity, not shown in sculpture form, but as a painted picture. That is why this *sabhā* is a *chitrasabhā*, a *sabhā* where Śiva dances in a painted picture rather than as a metallic or lithic representation. This is a large and picturesque hall, not far from the famous waterfalls, and is one of the reputed sacred spots associated with Naṭarāja.

A striking description of Śiva dancing as Ardhanārīśvara, amidst picturesque surroundings of Kuttālam inspiring even birds to follow his example of dance, is given by Jñānasambanda in one of his *Tevāram* hymns. Adorned with the milky white moon and with his lady love, as the left half of his body, sings and dances Śiva, tearing Yama's form asunder, with blue lotuses blooming, like the eyes of the rock-laden mountains around, resounding with bees, near the long spray of water falls, inducing the beautiful peacock to dance with his

mate: *pālven matichūḷip pākattor peṅkalantu pāḷi-yāṭik kālanuṭal kīḷiyak kāyntāritampolum kalchūḷ-verpīl nīlamalarakkuvaḷai kaṇṭirakka vaṇṭararru neṭun-taṇchāral kolamaṭamañṇai peṭaiyoṭāṭṭayarun kurum-palāve* (*Tevārattirupatikamkal, Tirujñānasambanda 2, 71, 4*).

In his *Tiruvāchakam*, Māṇikkavāchakar has a glorious hymn in praise of Śiva at Kuttālam. In great emotion gushes a strain of music in this hymn of Māṇikkavāchakar, conveying his mental attitude, that cares naught for kinsman, village, name and fame, the learned ones and learning itself, but only yearns and melts for the resounding foot of the dancing Lord of Kuttālam, like the cow longing for the calf: *urrārai yān veṇṭen ūr veṇṭen per veṇṭen karrārai yān veṇṭen karpanavum iniyamaiyum kurrālat tamarn-turāiyun kūttā un kurai kaḷarke karrāvin manam-pola kachīnturuka veṇṭuvane* (*Tiruvāchakam 39, 3*).

In this, the resounding anklet of the dancing foot of Śiva, jingling as his movement commences, cannot but recall Nilakaṇṭha Dikshita, yearning to hear the sound of the anklet of Devī, at least at the end of his mortal existence: *ākaraṇeyam api nāma virāmakāle mātās tavāṅghri-maṇinūpuraśīṇjitāni*.

Kanakasabhā

The most important of all these *sabhās*, and the best known, is the golden hall at Chidambaram, famous for its temple in a forest of Tillai trees. Chidambaram is also called Vyāghrapura or Puliūr, because of its association with Vyāghrapāda. Another name Puṇḍarikapura associates it with the lotus-heart of Virāṭ-purusha, or the Universal Being. Śiva here is of the nature of the sky. He dances in the sky, *chidambaram*, in the golden dance hall—*kanakasabhā*. Nāṭarāja, as the lord of this hall, is *Kanakasabhāpati*. His dance is the dance of bliss, *ānandatāṇḍava*. It is very interesting that there is a hall beyond, all empty, to suggest space, *ākāśa*. A screen here, when pulled aside, reveals just space, with no real image in it except what fancy may imagine as present in the sky. The removal of the veil is just the removal of ignorance, and behind the veil is the real truth—*sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*, representing the Nāṭarāja form itself. This representation of ether, space or void, represents the *rahasya* of *chidambara*, or the mystery. The *chitsabhā* here is where Nāṭarāja danced and gave a glorious vision to Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda.

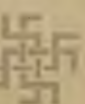
Tradition has it that king Simhavarman,

who was on a visit here at Tillaivana, bathed in the tank in the vicinity of the temple, and became golden-hued, which gave him the name of Hiranyavarman. The name is at once suggestive of early Pallava genealogy. It is just possible that one of the earliest kings to deck this hall with gold was a Pallava king, Simhavarman.

The *nṛityasabhā* in the Chidambaram temple is an exceedingly lovely one, with beautiful dance figures carved. The dance hall at Chidambaram is a lovely pillared one, with wheels on either side and galloping horses as additions to the *maṇḍapa*, making it a *ratha*. Such additions are of the later Chola period, and there are fine examples similar to this at Dārāsūram and elsewhere. The Chidambaram dance hall is the finest of this type. It is no wonder that Fergusson felt that the *nṛityasabhā*, 'ornamented with dancing figures, is more graceful and more elegantly executed than any others of their class in South India'.

Śeṣha, the serpent couch of Viṣṇu, having heard of the wonderful dance movements of Śiva from Viṣṇu himself, desired to be born to witness the glorious vision. He descended from heaven with his hands clasped in adoration and became the offspring of sage Atri and Anasūyā. He was significantly called Patañjali—*pat*, descend, *añjali*, hands in adoration. He awaited the arrival of Vyāghrapāda, another great sage who was equally desirous of having a gaze at Śiva's dance movements. By the grace of Śiva, his legs were transformed into those of a tiger, to enable him more easily to gather *bilva* leaves and flowers from briars and bushes in order to worship the Lord. On the appointed day, when Śiva gave them the vision of his dance, all the celestials, including the Pramathagaṇas, were around him. The musical instruments were played by Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Nandikeśvara and others, as in all the other cases of Śiva's dance elsewhere.

Having these factors in mind, Samara-puṅgava Dikshita in describing Chidambaram, gives significant epithets by a clever play on words. 'Having crossed Tuṇḍiramaṇḍala, he reached Puṇḍarikapura, which was like the netherworld occupied by the lord of snakes, like the interior of the forest marked by footprints of the tiger, like the center of the milky ocean marked by the slumber hall of the opponent of Kaiṭabha, Viṣṇu, like a large mountain fastness, the remover of the terrible



effect of the fever of fear of the cycle of births and deaths': *atilaṅghya tuṇḍiramandalam pātāla-bhuvanam iva phaṇirājasamadhishthitam vipināntarālam iva vyāghrapādālāñchhitam kalasābdbhīḥṛdayam iva kaiṭabhadvēshinidrāgrihāñchitam vipulagīridurgam iva vimatabhāvabhītisañjvarachandārītiḥaram ahiṇḍata puṇḍarikapuram* (Yātrāprabandha, p. 77).

Even the purpose of Śiva's dance here is explained. 'In my presence, dance is the one means of attaining all desired objects by sentient beings and the art of dance is this. Is it not in this spirit O Lord of Puṇḍarikapura that you dance to show the mode of dance movements?' *sannidhau mama samastadehinām nṛttam eva nikhilārthasādhakam tatkalaivam iti kim nu darśayan puṇḍarikapurānātha nṛityasi* (Yātrāprabandha 5, 13).

Tirunāvukkaraṣu, the great Śaiva devotee, who converted Pallava Mahendravarman back to the Śaiva fold, goes into ecstasy, at the sight of Śiva dancing at Chidambaram. He confesses that the best witness of his dance is the lovely goddess Śivakāmasundarī, the beloved consort of Naṭarāja, who, with her dark eyes streaked with collyrium, purposefully celestial, for witnessing the dance in all its glory, is the only one who could take in the vision with perfect ease and competence. That is why she is described as admiringly gazing at Śiva's dance movements. But then he wonders whether once the mortals witness the glory of Śiva's dance here, they could have anything more to see. He exclaims that after his eyes have watched the dance of the Lord of Chirrambalam in the lotus-laden verdent groves of Tillai, as he expressed himself in suggestive hand movements in dance, shining all the while like a blazing light, and admiringly looked on by the daughter of the mountain, with eyes beautified with collyrium, could there be any more to be seen: *cheyññinra nīla malarkinra tillaichchirram-palavan maiññinra voṇkaṇ malaimakaḷ kaṇṭu maḷiñ-tunirka naiññin veriyum viḷakkotta nīla maṇimittarrān kaiññinra vāṭalkaṇ ṭāṭpinnaik kaṇ koṇṭu kāṇpatenne* (Tevāratirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu 4, 80, 5).

He proclaims the glory of the lord, Lord among dancers, who dances in the grand style, beyond the limited small sphere of ether that is part of himself and justifies his true epithet of the Lord of celestials, the greatest of them all: *tirunaṭṭa māṭiyait tillaik kiraiyaich chirrambalattup perunaṭṭa māṭiyai vānavar konenru vāltuvane* (Tevāratirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu 4, 81, 1).

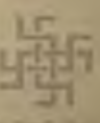
The purpose of his dance in the verdent grove of Tillai, as he explains clearly, is to shed moonlight lustre, from his heaped up tawny locks, to remove the darkness of ignorance and bestow his grace: *cheñchaṭai karraimurraṭ tīlanilā verikkuñ chenni nañchaṭai kaṇṭanāraik kāṇalā nara-vanāru mañchaṭai cholaittillai malkuchir rampalatte tuñchaṭai yiruḷkiḷiyat tuḷaṅkeri yāṭumāre* (Tevāratirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu 4, 22, 1).

He even feels that though normally the craving of the devotee is to aspire for union with the Lord, by cutting the endless chain of painful births and deaths, he would nevertheless prefer birth on mortal soil ever and for ever, if only to witness the glory of Śiva's form, as he dances at Tillai. He bursts into a hymn expressing that if only it were made possible to witness the arched brow, the smile on the vermilion *kovai*-shaped lips, moistened locks, milky white ash-smeared coral red bodily hue, and the uplifted golden foot, granting bliss so sweet, would not one crave for birth in this mortal world: *kunitta puruvamuñ kovvaichchev vāyir kumiñchirippum panitta chaṭaiyum paḷaḷampon meniyir pālveṇṇūrum initta muṭaiya veṭuttapaṇ pāta-muñ kāṇapperrāl manittap piraviyum veṇṭuva teyinta mānilatte* (Tevāratirupatikamkal, Tirunāvukkaraṣu 4, 81, 4).

Almost in the same strain Sundaramūrtisvāmi poses the question in his hymn whether there is anything further to be attained after reaching the Lord of Chirrambalam at Puliyūr, that dances with the drum, pan of fire flame and furious wriggling snake in his hands, gracious in offering protection from the throttle of Yama, at the end of a hapless life, weaned away from contemplation on the foot of Śiva, raised and bent in dance: *maṭittāṭum aṭimaikkaṇ anriye mananenī vāḷunāḷum taṭuttāṭi tarumanār tamarchekkiliṭumpotu taṭuttāṭ koḷvān kaṭumtāṭum karatalattiḷ tamarukamum erikakuḷ kariya pāmpum piṭittāṭi puliyūrchchir rampalattē perumānaiḷ perrā manre* (Tevāratirupatikamkal, Sundaramūrtisvāmikal 7, 90, 1).

There is also the tradition of the dance of Kālī, who challenged Śiva on their relative skill in the art. The story at Tiruvālaṅgāḍu is almost repeated here. Kālī claimed the area as hers, and Naṭarāja had to establish his right by vanquishing her in dance, which he did. There is a very important shrine for Kālī at one end of Chidambaram.

The glory of Chidambaram is clear from



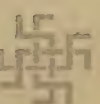
various texts that have explained, not only the significance of Naṭarāja, but also the importance of this place. The importance of Vyāghrapura and Śiva's dance has lengthy narration in the *Sūtasamhitā* of *Skāndapurāṇa*. Among the earliest texts are those of Tirumūlar, like *Tirumantiram*, *Tiruvāmbalachakkaram*, *Tirukkūttadarśanam*. Apart from the writings of the early Śaiva saints, like Appar, Tirujñānasambandar and Sundaramūrti, who lived in the seventh-eighth centuries, and made Chidambaram the theme of their hymns, like many of the other great Śaivite centres, there are also Vaishṇava saints like Tirumaṅgaiyālvār, and Kulaśekhara, ninth century royal devotees of Govindarāja, the slumbering Lord at Chidambaram, and the spectator of Śiva's dance. The Chōḷa prince Gaṇḍarāditya, the father of Uttamachōḷa, lived in the tenth century and wrote *Tiruvīśaiṭṭā*, and Śekkiḷār in the twelfth century wrote the great *Tirut-tōṇḍarpurāṇam*, eulogising the lives of Śaiva saints. In fact, this book had its origin in the temple at Chidambaram itself, and is believed to have been blessed by the Lord in person. The famous *Koyirpurāṇam* of Umāpatiśivāchārya, written a century later, is also important. In the fifteenth century, Aruṇagiri sang hymns on Chidambaram in his *Tiruppukal*. There are several later-day works, like *Naṭeśa-vijaya*, *Patañjalivijaya* and others in Sanskrit, and several hymns on Naṭarāja in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries and even in the nineteenth century. Kumāraguruparasvāmi of the seventeenth century wrote the famous *Chidambaramummanikkovai* and *Śivakāmiyammayirattaimaṇimālai*. Gopalakṛishṇa Bhārati's *Nandānārcharitam* is the most famous in recent times. *Chidambaramapurāṇam* in Tamil by Puraṇatirumalaināthar is of the fifteenth century. A vast literature grew up around this most sacred spot for Naṭarāja in the south and its sanctity has remained unrivalled.

The magnificent temple here has the main towers, *gopuras*, decorated with a series of sculptures, representing the dance *karaṇas*. In the case of the one of these, in the eastern *gopura*, they are all the hundred and eight *karaṇas*, authenticated by the textual portions from Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* defining them, in-

cised in the script of the twelfth-thirteenth century. They thus form a great legacy for understanding how carefully the literary text and the visual form, in bodily movements, was preserved nearly a thousand years ago. We have still an earlier series in Tañjāvūr, in the Brīha-dīśvara temple, where Śiva's *tāṇḍava* is portrayed in at least eighty-one *karaṇas*. A slightly later series, but nearly contemporary with that from Chidambaram, is to be found in a Viṣṇu temple at Kumbakoṇam. A representation of the series of *karaṇas*, as on the *gopuras* at Chidambaram, is also found in the *gopuras* at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, but they are not as beautiful as at Chidambaram. Even here it is the representation of the *karaṇas* on the eastern *gopura* that excels.

The Lord of the golden hall became such a favourite of the Chōḷas, that as their tutelary deity, he was hailed everywhere in their realm. Representations of Naṭarāja became indispensable in all Śiva's temples, from the Chōḷa period onward. Parāntaka, one of the early Chōḷa kings after Vijayālaya, was responsible for renewing the golden decoration of the hall, centuries after Hiraṇyavarman. This is often mentioned in inscriptions. Sundarapāṇḍya, the famous Pāṇḍyan king, who beautified the temple at Śrīraṅgam, had also a hand here at Chidambaram at beautifying this hall.

The most important factor at Chidambaram is that, as Śiva dances in the *nṛityasabhā*, Govindarāja slumbers on his serpent couch very close to him, as the greatest witness of his dance. As Govindarāja and Naṭarāja represent the same concept of creation, sustenance and destruction, which is not a negative factor, but a positive one, in that it only means rejuvenation and recreation and deliverance by removing the veil of ignorance, here it is the combination of the *māyā* of Viṣṇu and the *māyā* of Śiva, both having established the oneness of the highest spiritual knowledge leading on to bliss. Concentration and contemplation on the deity that dances in the lotus of the devotee's heart is only for the achievement of this purpose, and it is from this point of view that all these *sabhās* are conceived as great spots for the bloom of the flower of wisdom and final beatitude.

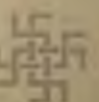


APPENDIX A

śivakāmasundarīsametachidāmbareśvarāṣṭottaraśatanāmāvaliḥ

chidāmbareśvarāya namaḥ
 hemasabheśvarāya namaḥ
 chitsabheśvarāya namaḥ
 chidāmbarasabhānāthāya namaḥ
 chidāmbarasabhāpataye namaḥ
 chidāmbapurādhiśāya namaḥ
 chidāmbarasabhānāṭyāya namaḥ
 sabheśvarāya namaḥ
 sabhāmūrtāye namaḥ
 samrāje namaḥ
 sadasaspataye namaḥ
 chidrūpāya namaḥ
 chitsabhānāthāya namaḥ
 nateśāya namaḥ
 naṭanāyakāya namaḥ
 sabhāmaṇaye namaḥ
 sabhādīptāya namaḥ
 naṭarājāya namaḥ
 tāṇḍaveśvarāya namaḥ
 puṇḍarikapurādhiśāya namaḥ
 puṇḍarikapureśvarāya namaḥ
 puṇḍarikaruchaye namaḥ
 vandyāya namaḥ
 puṇḍarikākshasevitāya namaḥ
 tillarudrāya namaḥ
 mahārudrāya namaḥ
 nṛittāṅgāya namaḥ
 nṛttasundarāya namaḥ
 pañchāksharāya namaḥ
 paramjyotiṣhe namaḥ
 sunderānandavigrahāya namaḥ
 ānandanāṭanādhiśāya namaḥ
 sachchidānandavigrahāya namaḥ
 vyomakeśāya namaḥ
 chinmahāvvyomatāṇḍavāya namaḥ
 aṁbareśvarāya namaḥ
 hamsāya namaḥ
 kuñchitāṅghraye namaḥ
 chidāmbarāya namaḥ
 tillavāsāya namaḥ
 chidiśāya namaḥ
 virāje namaḥ
 tillavanādhipāya namaḥ
 trailokyasundarāya namaḥ
 tillavanāya namaḥ
 tillapureśvarāya namaḥ
 vyāghracharmadharāya namaḥ
 vyāghrapureśāya namaḥ
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 yajñeśvarāya namaḥ
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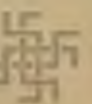
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 pañchāksharyāi namaḥ
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 harāyāi namaḥ



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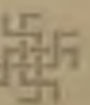


APPENDIX B

chidambareśvara sahasranāmāvaliḥ

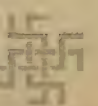
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 kālahantre namaḥ
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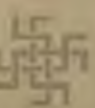
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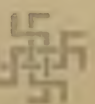


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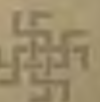
ityākāśabhairavakalpe umāmaheśvarasamvāde chidambareśvaranāmasahasram sampūrṇam

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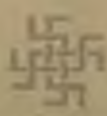
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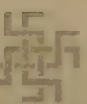
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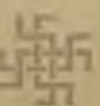
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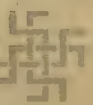
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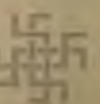
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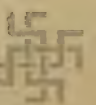
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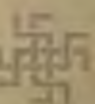
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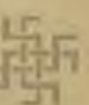
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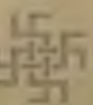


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